Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY • NUMBER SIX • DECEMBER 1985

The New Khmer Rouge

Ross H. Munro

Another Look at the Jewish Vote
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"Yours Sincerely, Sinclair Levy"
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Gaddis Recognized
Carol Iannone

BOOKS IN REVIEW: Arch Puddington / Edward Alexander Michael Novak / Larry D. Nachman / Terry Teachout

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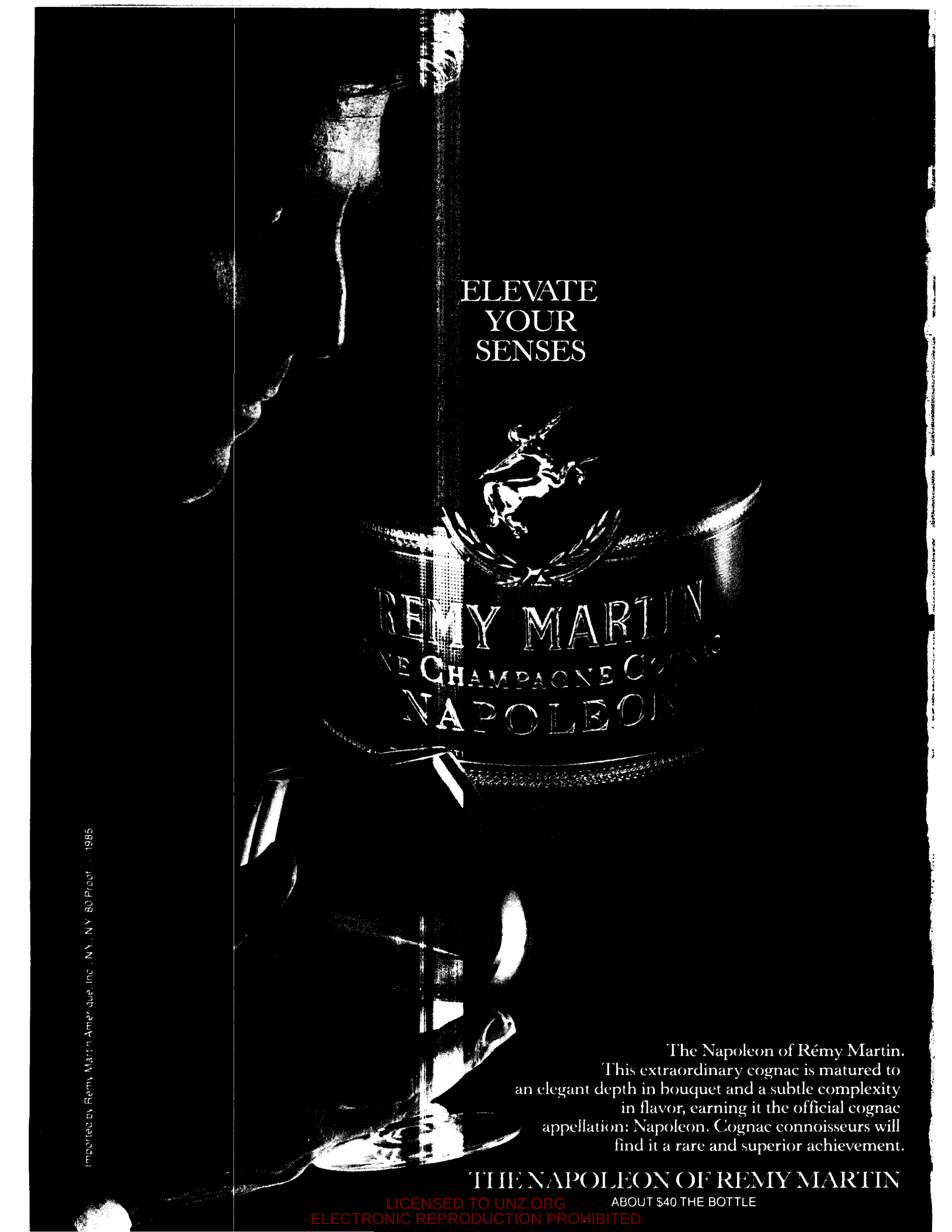

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VOLUME 80 NUMBER SIX *DECEMBER 1985*

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Letters from Readers

Bitburg

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It may well be a commonplace for letter writers to express the hope that one COMMENTARY article or another will become required reading for politicians, pollsters, and other molders of public opinion. What greater tribute can I pay to Midge Decter's brilliant analysis, "Bitburg: Who Forgot What" [August], than to wish it that same well-deserved fate?

It is difficult to select for special commendation from the many illuminating insights in her article: the trivialization of both the special (Jewish) and the general significance of the Holocaust, of which the President's incredible remarks concerning "victims" was only the latest and perhaps most puerile example; the unique import, in a world not wanting in examples of man's inhumanity to man, of the horror erupting in that vanguard of enlightenment, Western Europe; the exposure of President Reagan's talents as a communicator (and *what* it is he does communicate); the shameless reduction of the vexing moral and political dilemmas posed by his visit to an "ethnic" issue; the politically motivated cynicism of some of the President's detractors, and the moral obtuseness it reveals.

I could go on. And I shall, if only to mention two more: first, Miss Decter's questioning of the motives for and the meaning of Helmut Kohl's invitation and what it consciously or unconsciously expressed: that "in the end" the Nazis had been "just plain Germans like everyone else"—and the very different sense in which that telling phrase can and undoubtedly will be understood by the victims and the victimizers and their progeny. Second, her denunciation of that primal sin of current so-called liberalism: the refusal to name names, and the feckless recourse to pious generalities in the face of concrete and discrete fact.

My only cavil with Miss Decter: it was not only Jody Powell and George F. Will (an otherwise thoughtful and eloquent columnist who appeared to have temporarily lost his eminently good sense) who defended the President. William F. Buckley wrote: "Reagan did the right thing. He performed splendidly. And he is owed apologies he will never get." From whom, I wonder.

Theodore S. Hamerow, in "The Hidden Holocaust" [COMMENTARY, March], has sketched the appalling dimensions of the complicity of the peoples of the German-occupied lands in the destruction of European Jewry. Edward Alexander, in "Operation Moses" [COMMENTARY, July], informed us of the "moral obscenity" of those on the Left and in mainstream Germany who, in a frenzy of anti-Semitism bordering on the hallucinatory, have found in the airlift of the Ethiopian Jews an astonishing occasion to equate the Israelis with the Nazis, no less, for "kidnapping" their black brethren. Perhaps one day COMMENTARY will explore in depth the reasons for the deadly persistence and widespread diffusion of the virus of anti-Semitism. In the meantime, we have Messrs. Hamerow and Alexander, as well as Midge Decter, to thank for reminding us of what Bitburg revealed that too many have already forgotten.

HENRY SHERMAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When Midge Decter gets through analyzing President Reagan's visit to the Bitburg cemetery, her conclusions seem inescapable. How could anyone have believed anything else? She has that rare combination: a first-rate mind and a sense of priorities.

Before reading Miss Decter's analysis, I was exposed to thousands of words about Bitburg on television and in the newspapers. Yet I did not understand how President Reagan and Chancellor Kohl, despite hard-working and intelligent staffs, could have gotten into such a mess. Now I see how democratic leaders can fail to grasp the implications of their own actions. Issues confuse them, as they do the rest of us. The late Fiorello LaGuardia said, "When I make a mistake, it's a beaut."

One of the strengths of our democratic society is that Midge Decter is free to give a candid appraisal of what went wrong.

JACKSON TOBY
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter asks a key question:

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"What does it mean to 'remember' the Holocaust?" A resolve to prevent future Holocausts is a vital first step, but it is only a first step. The wherewithal to carry out that resolve is equally necessary.

Some of the politicians and others who most vociferously criticized the President's visit to Bitburg are the very ones who oppose virtually every defense appropriation and foreign involvement. They are the spiritual heirs of Chamberlain, not Churchill; of the isolationists, not Roosevelt. The policies they espouse helped pave the way for Nazism in the 1930's and are now paving the way for other forms of totalitarianism, which so easily lead to horrors such as genocide. During the 1973 Yom Kippur War, desperately needed military supplies were ordered to Israel by President Nixon, whom these same people reviled as a warmonger; the supplies were flown in C5A's (planes they opposed as expensive and unreliable), which made refueling stops in Portugal (a country then deemed too undemocratic to be our ally). Direct intervention of Soviet forces was prevented by a worldwide alert of U.S. forces, which was derided as an attempt to distract attention from Watergate. In short, "Never again" —which such people fervently proclaim—was made real by policies which they fervently oppose. . . .

We cannot remember the Holocaust in any meaningful way if at the same time we reduce our defenses below a safe level; if we castigate minor imperfections in our friends while ignoring the major defects of our enemies; or if we turn a deaf ear to the cries of the Cambodians, the Vietnamese boat people, the Afghans, or the Miskito Indians. If remembering the Holocaust does not make us more sensitive to these cries, of what use is the memory? . . .

DAVID C. STOLINSKY
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As one who had written the President angrily prior to his visit to Bitburg, who had struggled previously, and unsuccessfully, to feel comfortable with German acquaintances, . . . I ended up feeling liberated by the President's visit to Bitburg and by the way he handled it.

There were several outgrowths of the visit that should be emphasized. The speech by Chancellor Kohl at Bergen-Belsen, mentioned by Midge Decter, and another he delivered there a week or so previously were widely reported in West Germany but not in the United States. These speeches avowed the eternal responsibility that Germans, collectively and as a nation, must bear for the horror of the Holocaust. Since then, President Weizäcker has spoken several times publicly in the same vein. These statements have been far more explicit and sensitive than any made previously, including any by the revered Konrad Adenauer.

Calling for notice as well were the statements by many young West Germans acknowledging a sense of horror at their national past, and a sense of bewilderment at the complicity of their elders. . . .

American Jews would be wise to direct their vigilance toward anti-Semitic acts now being committed in Nicaragua, Cuba, the Soviet Union, and, of course, throughout the Soviet puppet regimes in Eastern Europe. The threat to Jewry does not lie in the Federal Republic of Germany where, by a strange irony, the bungled visit by our President has evoked, at last, a clear, unequivocal avowal by the West German people and its leaders of their past and of their responsibility for that past.

FREDERIC WILE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter does her usual superb job in analyzing the American and Jewish angles of the Bitburg imbroglio. But she fails to give a convincing answer as to why Chancellor Kohl would lead his "good friend," Ronald Reagan, up the graveyard path in the first place, and then insist on Bitburg and only Bitburg while a storm of indignation all but engulfed the President.

Having lived in postwar Germany for almost four years, I can assure Miss Decter that the answer is not the one she suggests: that there is a deep need in the German psyche finally to lay to rest the guilt arising from the crimes committed during the Nazi era. The two generations that have grown up since the collapse of the Third Reich have long since dissociated themselves from these atrocities. Educated by teachers who were themselves former Nazi sympathizers (there were none other available at war's end), they learned precious little in school about Auschwitz and Buchenwald. I have raised these taboo subjects with literally hundreds of Germans. With few exceptions, the pat response was "we were not aware," or simply annoyance.

If there were some profound guilt or remorse about the Nazis latent in postwar Germany, it would be manifested in a special relationship to Jewish survivors, particularly as regards the security of Israel, or in works of literature and art. But West German policy toward Israel is now consistently pro-Arab. . . . And as far as literature or art is concerned, all the works of permanent value—including documentation of the Holocaust itself—have their origins in other countries.

The psychological need for Bitburg thus scarcely lies in the sins of the past, but rather in the political exigencies of the present. The key to the significance of Bitburg is to be found in the self-Finlandization process now well under way in Western Europe, which Walter Laqueur, among others, has brilliantly depicted in the pages of COMMENTARY. West Germany, with one out of five industrial jobs now dependent on exports to the Soviet Union and its satellites, and unwilling to pay for a credible defense against a conventional Soviet invasion, is economically and strategically constrained to maintain a neutralist foreign policy. The difference between a Helmut Kohl and a Helmut Schmidt in this regard is solely one of style, not deeds.

The moral dilemma for the West Germans is how to justify neutralism, since they patently owe their freedom and prosperity to the United States, while their less fortunate brethren on the other side of the wall owe their penury and vassalage to the Soviets. The answer is, of course, to bring the White House to the same low level of respectability as the Kremlin. After so much money and good will have been lavished on the reconstruction and protection of a democratic West Germany, most Americans—including Miss Decter—cannot fully comprehend that an enormous gulf now separates Western Europe from ourselves, despite almost daily confirmation of this basic and painful fact. In 1981, for example, 300,000 German youths took to the streets of Bonn to protest alleged American atrocities in El Salvador. I asked a leading West German

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politician how it was possible that the largest demonstration in the history of his country could be focused on the activities of perhaps 55 American military advisers in El Salvador. His answer was uncharacteristically candid: "We Germans need El Salvador as the moral equivalent of Afghanistan."

Thus the basic equation is set: the worse the Soviets behave internationally, the more the United States must be criticized and demeaned. While German youths are more prone to overt acts of anti-Americanism, the philosophy of moral equivalance has permeated every fiber of society, including most particularly the media. The most blatant example occurred in the wake of the Soviet dismemberment of the Solidarity movement in Poland, when the United States feebly protested the West German start-up on the Siberian gas pipeline, the biggest East-West trade deal ever. At the time, the two leading weeklies, *Stern* and *Spiegel*, published identical lead editorials, accusing the United States of hypocrisy; in their view the Soviets were merely doing in their sphere of influence what the United States would do to West Germany if the political situation got out of hand. . . .

The only example that Miss Decter gives—or anyone can give—of exactly how Helmut Kohl is supporting his "friend" Ronald Reagan is his running some political risk by accepting deployment of the Pershing missiles. It should be remembered, however, that it was Helmut Schmidt who demanded these missiles in 1979, over grave U.S. objections, on the ground that the United States could not be trusted to react with strategic weapons if the Soviets invaded Germany. Far from being a symbol of NATO-alliance unity, the Pershing missiles represent a profound malaise. That their deployment should be considered a "favor" to the United States demonstrates clearly that whatever course the United States chooses must be morally questionable. Now the argument runs that the United States is foisting the missiles on Europe because it thereby hopes to escape a direct nuclear exchange with the Soviets.

While the current moral-equivalence formula can now be maintained by referring to El Salvador, Grenada, or any other action—however mild—that the United States undertakes to fend off Soviet expansionism, there is still the outstanding question of how to square neutralism with past American behavior. After all, it is still within the living memory of many Germans that American GI's were handing out Hershey bars behind their lines while the Soviets raped and pillaged to the East. Here is where Bitburg fills a crucial void. In forcing the genial and unsuspecting Ronald Reagan to pay homage to buried SS men, Helmut Kohl brought America to its Canossa: the moral superiority of the American cause in World War II is thereby erased. The Americans won, and the Soviets won, because they had the stronger armies. That is the only lesson the war teaches.

The wreath an American President laid at Bitburg, forty years after the death camps, must take its place alongside Chamberlain's umbrella in the grim annals of European appeasement and defeatism. In Western Europe, the sands of democracy and decency have little time to run.

ALLEN GREENBERG
Bethesda, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

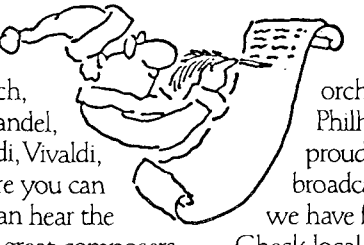
In her article, Midge Decter writes:

> That no one in all the hundreds of thousands of words devoted to the controversy in the press and on the air saw fit to question the curious role of Helmut Kohl and what it might mean is a tribute to the massive moral and political confusion engendered by Bitburg.

No one? The Washington *Post* of April 23 carried a column entitled "Two Who Bumbled." The two, of course, were Ronald Reagan and Helmut Kohl. Of Mr. Kohl the column said:

> Chancellor Kohl, after all, was the main actor. He insisted that the Bonn economic summit be joined with the ceremony of reconciliation. He proposed the visit to the Bitburg cemetery. He proposed—or at least said he proposed, for the evidence seems far from clear—that Reagan visit Dachau. He accepted, or said he accepted, a turndown of that suggestion by the President.
>
> . . . Kohl could easily have saved

Christmas Liszt



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> Reagan from his lack of seriousness. . . . But he is a provincial—a pure product of Rhineland Pfalz. . . . He lacks the experience and vision to be a statesman of world class.
>
> His great quality is his great weakness—mindless optimism. So he did not see that the visit, and its chosen motif of reconciliation, was running into trouble. He simply plunged forward.

I am familiar with those words because I wrote them. But the column was not exactly obscure. It led the op-ed page of the Washington *Post*. It was syndicated to, and reprinted in, over a hundred papers in this country. It was extensively cited in the German press.

The point is that media criticism—even by people as intelligent and discriminating as Midge Decter—is highly impressionistic, not systematic. Phrases like "no one in all the hundreds of thousands of words" usually amount to a certificate of error.

JOSEPH KRAFT

Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Though I found the usual liberal-baiting rhetoric and facile denunciations of the so-called Left that I have come to expect from Midge Decter, I was sufficiently impressed and moved after reading her article on Bitburg to laud her performance. One strong rebuke, however, is in order.

I cannot imagine even so voracious a reader and listener to news programs as I imagine Miss Decter to be making so unqualified a statement as the declaration that "no one . . . in the press and on the air saw fit to question the curious role of Helmut Kohl." My own sense of professional integrity compels me to respond to such an absurd generalization.

I am a university professor who does a nightly news commentary program that goes all over the West, into Canada, and down to Mexico on KGO radio, an ABC affiliate in San Francisco. East Coast chauvinism notwithstanding, this is a fairly wide geographic range, and the program reaches hundreds of thousands of listeners. I am certain that other outraged commentators must have voiced sentiments similar to those I put out on the airwaves. I not only consistently and heatedly questioned Helmut Kohl's role throughout the entire fiasco of Ronald Reagan's going to Bitburg—I made certain my audience realized that Mr. Kohl's erroneous instincts for his own political future and his need for the exoneration of the German people from collective guilt were indeed responsible for making our foolish President tender a promise he subsequently felt obliged to keep. German support for "Star Wars" and the placement of nuclear arms on German soil were enough of a tradeoff here, but I let my listeners know that Mr. Reagan's initial remarks to the press about the German people feeling an ample quantity of guilt and his later muddle-headed and idiotic comparison of young Hitler soldiers to the Holocaust dead were both almost certainly a reflection of Mr. Kohl's thinking—they were, I imagine, taken from conversations between the two men with the kind of deftness with which Mr. Reagan manages to cull snippets of thought from the *Reader's Digest*.

Moreover, what I made abundantly clear to my listeners, and what I am relatively certain must have been evident to other commentators, was the strange behavior of Mr. Kohl as he attempted on the one hand to memorialize the Jewish dead while on the other forcing the Bitburg issue on the Jewish living despite their nearly unanimous pleas that the placing of a wreath at the headstones of members of the SS was a defilement of their dead.

As I saw it and said it, Mr. Kohl was reenacting the greatest of German sins against the Jewish people—he was imposing on them an abstraction. In this case his notion of reconciliation. And he brooked no compromise, showed no mercy, and thus obstinately refused to let our President off the hook.

One can reasonably conclude that Mr. Kohl sought to exculpate himself and his fellow Germans at whatever cost, even including the nearly collective will of the Jewish people. The subsequent forbidding of Jews to enter the grounds of Bergen-Belsen was as revealing as it was damnable—revealing of the vestigial anti-Semitism which continues to haunt Mr. Kohl and the so-called new Germany. It is difficult for me to believe that I was the one voice offering such conclusions, since they seem so abundantly clear.

MICHAEL J. KRASNY

KGO Radio
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her article on Bitburg in which she—wrongly in my opinion—relates that unfortunate event to historical problems as far removed from each other as Munich and the future of the West Bank, Midge Decter raises the issue of Helmut Kohl's emotional stake in seeing the affair through to the bitter end. . . .

Miss Decter argues that a need to redo or undo German history was the reason behind Chancellor Kohl's stubborn refusal to modify President Reagan's visit. The difficulty with this is that "history" is not a personal category. People, Helmut Kohl no less than others, do not live in "history." They live in little versions of it, in a word, personal history, and Mr. Kohl made his plain enough. He constantly invoked the fact that he had been fifteen years old at the end of the war, too young to be responsible in *any* way for what had happened; indeed, not at all unlike those innocent teen-agers President Reagan mourned in Bitburg who were as much the victims of Nazism as the murdered Jews.

One need not be a psychiatrist or even a psychohistorian to note that repetition means something of great importance to the speaker, positive or negative. Mr. Kohl's constant invocation of his age of innocence is the clear and simple key. He desired *personal* absolution for himself and for the majority of present-day Germans who were either teen-agers or not yet born in May 1945. His invariable repetition of this theme probably was the genesis of Mr. Reagan's gesture and the hapless rationale that hardly any Germans are alive who remember. One can almost sense Mr. Reagan gleaning the phrase from Mr. Kohl. . . .

HAROLD TICKTIN

Cleveland, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter has offered us relief from the barrage of lies that we have been treated to concerning President Reagan's visit to Bitburg. But she has not gone far enough.

Many of the issues she brings up are real but secondary. Yes, Ronald Reagan was confused on this issue—so what else is new? It might be regarded as "strange" for a country to celebrate the anniversary of its own defeat, but only if that country's basic political system had not

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drastically altered in the meantime. . . . Talk of "black holes" yawning in "German consciousness" might be poetic, but it is hardly objective. And the statements of various Jewish leaders and veterans implying that the visit could be construed as implicitly honoring the Nazis only show the degree to which some people can be caught in a time warp, mindlessly repeating outworn slogans as if they were the latest word on present realities. . . .

The Nazis are dead. They represent no threat to anyone. But . . . the fact that every sort of leftist, liberal, and Communist . . . around the world, including many virulent enemies of the Jews and Israel, also crusaded against this visit is not insignificant. It is in this outpouring of hatred that we see the real source of the opposition to Bitburg. . . .

As I said above, the Nazis are dead. But their spiritual successors, the Communists, are very much alive, and in keeping with the bloodthirsty traditions of Hitler, are continuing the same horrors with a vengeance. They are a threat —to everyone. The West German military no longer fights for Nazism: it stands as a military bulwark for freedom and against . . . Communism.

The Communists do not want to confront this military machine, and the NATO forces behind it, directly. Rather, they want to discredit and demoralize it from within. And that is what Bitburg was all about—an attempt to smear the current German military and undermine our alliance with it and the free German people it defends. . . .

DAVID SOLAN
Norwalk, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It has always been my impression that the reason we remember the Holocaust is so that no one will ever again attempt genocide. Unhappily, postwar history indicates that we have not yet achieved that end. Nevertheless, despite lack of success, it has always seemed to me that remembrance of the Holocaust is a noble task.

During the Bitburg controversy, many Jews lost sight of this purpose. The Jewish community seemed to have forgotten its message of "Never Again" and traded it in for a less appealing slogan: "Never Forgive." Although it may be a heretical position for a Jew to take in 1985, I submit that Ronald Reagan was correct in his assertion that even members of the SS were victims of the Nazi regime. During World War II, the German people suffered a unique loss. That loss is more difficult to explain than the loss suffered by the Jewish people. The experiences of the Germans and the Jews during World War II are not comparable, but they each must be recognized. I do not pretend to understand what it must have been like to be in a concentration camp, but it does seem to me that we Jews emerged from the Holocaust with our humanity intact. Not so the Germans. German behavior during World War II was subhuman. It is horrible to think that someone once tried to exterminate my family from the face of the earth. I have to live with that fact. Nevertheless, it would be even more difficult to live with the fact that my father had tried to commit genocide.

During the Bitburg debate, many Jews lost sight of the awful past which the German people must deal with every day. The German reaction to last year's ceremonies in Normandy should have demonstrated that there is still a festering wound in Germany. We should care for that wound, not rub salt in it. The Bitburg visit should have been part of the healing process. Families of German war dead must not be continually excoriated for the sins of their fathers and husbands. If the Bitburg visit had been cancelled, German humanity would have been questioned to a greater degree than it was by the gruesome debate. Such conduct reinforces a historical predilection to hate Jews. President Reagan's handling of the Bitburg situation was far from perfect. He should have gone to Bitburg and announced with much more vigor than he did that the acts of the Third Reich were despicable, abominable, repugnant, hateful, odious, abhorrent, loathsome, disgusting, and aberrant; but that we grieve for all people who died and who were victims of that time. . . .

There is one question to which I haved heard no satisfactory response: how can forgiveness be wrong?

DOUGLAS L. FURTH
Salt Lake City, Utah

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ronald Reagan's reluctance to offend the sensibilities of postwar Germany with unpleasant memo-

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ries on V-E day stands in striking contrast to the victorious posturing of Vice President Bush and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger at the more recent ceremony marking Japan's capitulation at the end of the Pacific war. Understating the historical significance of the Holocaust was not an isolated mistake related to the Bitburg incident. It reflects a wholesale revisionism concerning the Nazi regime that seems increasingly widespread on the Right in this country. Consider the case of White House Communications Director Patrick Buchanan who, in a column last February, called the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigation (the agency responsible for investigating Nazi war criminals) a "dim-witted instrument of Soviet disinformation," which displays inordinate "zealotry to punish naturalized American citizens who collaborated in the Holocaust forty years ago." Buchanan concedes that "Perhaps this endless search for Nazi war criminals, these endless reenactments, on stage and screen, of Hitler's concentration camps are good for the soul," but nevertheless questions "to what end all this wallowing in the atrocities of a dead regime when there is scarcely a peep of protest over the prison camps, the labor camps, the concentration camps operating now in China, Siberia, in Cuba or Vietnam?" . . .

Midge Decter, I believe, misses the point by arguing that President Reagan's Bitburg error was a conservative reapplication of the "rankest of the rank habits of present-day liberalism." Bitburg reflected, knowingly or unknowingly, the rankest of Gentile habits: anti-Semitism, a phenomenon shared by all political tendencies, hovering just below the surface of our political culture. . . . In fact, aside from the American labor movement (and, as Miss Decter correctly points out, the American Legion), no other non-Jewish institution in this country has both consistently opposed Communist totalitarianism and condemned President Reagan's Bitburg stupidity. For the American Jewish community, salvation comes from neither the Right nor the Left. We are strangers in a foreign land.

SAM SHUBE

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In lecturing American Jewry on "remembering" the Holocaust, Midge Decter . . . concludes with invective against the "rankest of the rank habits of present-day liberalism," the "recourse to generality." But it is exactly *her* "recourse to generality" which in the end transforms an otherwise instructive article into yet another platform for neoconservative polemics.

What else is one to make of Miss Decter's political litmus test for remembering? With her disingenuous comparison of Weimar's instability with purported Jewish neglect of current threats to American democratic institutions; with the pedantic application of the Munich message once again, this time vis-à-vis her dubious questioning of Jewish commitment to the survival of Israel, Miss Decter groups together the gamut of COMMENTARY's political agenda, domestic and foreign, all under the guise of exhorting American Jews to remember the Holocaust.

At best, in company with the liberals she lambastes, Miss Decter is hypocritically engaging in "rank" generalization. More probably, by battling for the neoconservative agenda *ad nauseam*, she is exploiting and trivializing the horror of the Holocaust.

PHILIP ROTHMAN

Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was inevitable, I suppose, that Midge Decter would permit her mostly brilliant piece on Reagan and Bitburg to be turned in part into a predictable smear of Jewish liberals. Her retelling of the facts of the Bitburg incident was comprehensive and complete. Her analysis of the strange mind-set and conduct of President Reagan and Chancellor Kohl was fascinating and, considering her rather well-known political views, even surprising. But one had to laugh when, as if on cue, came the assault on "present-day liberalism." Talk about artful (albeit irrelevant) interpolation!

Miss Decter's little sermon on the "political and social lessons" of the Holocaust is also off the mark. It is true that some Jews have grown careless in their regard for the institutions of a decent society. Sad to say, that carelessness is often best seen in neoconservative thought. And wouldn't you just expect a neoconservative to characterize the quest for a genuine and secure peace, whether in the Middle East or elsewhere in the world, as appeasement? As for the dangers to democracy, what could be more dangerous than a mean-spirited citizenry more preoccupied with reverse racism than with feeding the hungry?

As Miss Decter concludes (a conclusion with which I am in complete agreement), the real and never-ending task of Jews is in remembering the Holocaust and keeping faith with our dead. Why then is she so distressed over the fact that in fulfilling that role in the Bitburg controversy, we may have embarrassed the President or annoyed a few of his pals?

JORDAN C. BAND

Cleveland, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter . . . opened some fresh wounds. Time had served to diminish my disappointment with the President's moral confusion and lapses of conscience . . . in connection with his Bitburg visit. Intervening crises . . . had served to dull my senses after I had come to terms with the President's speeches in Germany.

Now it occurs to me that I should not have been surprised that an honorary member of the U.S. Holocaust Commission was ill-equipped to distinguish between victims of Nazi tyranny by choice and victims chosen for genocide by Nazi tyranny. Perhaps the President reflects the condition of many among us who, having been weaned on diets of movies, radio, and television, have lost the ability to understand the real meaning of words or the true impact of human events. Admittedly, it takes a strong will not to overidentify with make-believe characters, especially when talented writers, directors, and actors are able to arouse emotions more effectively than straight news reports of genocide, totalitarianism, and man's inhumanity to man.

MARTHA S. CHERKIS

Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In writing "Bitburg: Who Forgot What" Midge Decter herself apparently forgot that the current consensus among virtually all historians in regard to the German-controlled concentration camps located in the territory of the Old Reich (pre-1939) is that there were no gassings of anybody. Her description of the Dachau camp, built

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in 1933 upon an abandoned munitions factory eleven miles northwest of Munich, contradicts this consensus to the extent that it implies that there were gassings there. On the other hand, Martin Broszat of the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich came to the conclusion in 1960 that: "The gas chamber in Dachau was never completed and put into operation. . . . The mass extermination of Jews by gassing started in 1941/1942, and took place . . . with the aid of installations technically designed for this purpose, above all in occupied Polish territory . . ." (*Die Zeit*, August 26, 1960).

Indeed, what was at one time identified as gas chambers at Dachau is now identified, for the benefit of tourists visiting the camp, as a disinfecting chamber that was used for delousing clothing. . . . Of course, it is also widely acknowledged that such apparatus utilized the insecticide Zyklon B simply as a disinfectant rather than as a source of gas lethal to humans. The shower bath at Dachau, presumably installed for the same purpose as the ones at other camps in the Old Reich, viz., for disinfecting the camp inmates themselves, is now represented, as it also was immediately after the U.S. Army took over the camp, as a gas chamber. As the shower bath is the only facility at Dachau still identified as a gas chamber, it must be the uncompleted gas chamber which Broszat was referring to in the above-quoted statement. Nevertheless, in agreement with most students of the subject, he assures the reader that this gas chamber, unlike the four gas ovens in the Dachau crematorium, was never used for any purpose.

The generally accepted finding of Broszat not only flies in the face of the picture of Dachau painted by Miss Decter, but also of the testimonies and confessions presented at the infamous postwar Dachau trials as the sole proof of gassings at Dachau. Yet hundreds of individuals at the end of the Dachau trials were sent to the gallows on the basis of this proof. Moreover, similar proof was relied upon in all other war-crimes trials during and after World War II with similar results. The latter, I'm sure, both Miss Decter and Martin Broszat would rather forget.

CAROL B. MILLER

Baltimore, Maryland

MIDGE DECTER writes:

To Allen Greenberg: First, my thanks for your interesting, if most depressing, letter. No one who pays close attention to the condition of U.S.-German relations, and to that of the Western alliance generally, can be unaware of the efforts of many influential people—on both sides of the Atlantic, by the way—to establish the idea of moral equivalence between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nor is it difficult to trace the connection between this idea and the implicit advocacy of accommodation with the Soviets. I myself speculated in passing that perhaps what the Germans were really seeking absolution for was not their Nazi past but their neutralist future. On this score, there is little disagreement between us. Still, I would not take at face value any claims or appearances of German feelings of dissociation from Nazi atrocities. In my experience—which has, to be sure, been less continuous than your own—the subject still stirs among Germans of all ages a highly charged response, either positive or negative. Do not listen to the words; look at the faces. And why is it that Hitleriana still sells like hot-cakes in Germany? Without in any way contradicting what you say, I would still insist that Helmut Kohl's having compelled Ronald Reagan indirectly to pay his respects to the SS contained a very curious message to the world.

To Joseph Kraft: I did of course read your column about Helmut Kohl. Indeed, I am a faithful reader of all your columns. It did not seem to me, however, that calling Mr. Kohl a mindlessly optimistic provincial answered in any way to the issue I was raising. On the contrary, your idea seemed to me precisely to close down on the real question.

To Michael J. Krasny: An effort, covering many pages and thousands of words, to offer a serious analysis of a highly emotional and tangled dispute might in your opinion be wrong-headed or mistaken—I gather you did not find it so, and am pleased—but it is not in any case "baiting." Nor, if I were you, would I bandy the term "anti-Semitism" quite so freely as you did in connection with Helmut Kohl. Anti-Semitism is gravely important; if you will, a fateful concept. Hitler taught the world what it can mean, which is, after all, exactly what lay at the base of all the passion aroused by Bitburg. Promiscuous use of this term runs the risk of rendering it commonplace.

To Harold Ticktin: I do not know Helmut Kohl and therefore will not presume to judge whether what you say about his private motive is persuasive or not. But to claim that the head of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany—a country particularly crucial to the future fortunes of all of Europe—does not live in history is to offer a rather breathtaking proposition. It is the kind of proposition that allows one to deny the relevance of what happened in the 30's to what is happening today. I seriously doubt that Mr. Kohl can permit himself such a luxury. I am sure that Jews can't.

To David Solan: I am not aware of a single voice raised on any side of this issue (except, of course, that of the Soviets and their mouthpieces in the West) in denigration of the current West German military. Nor were only leftist voices raised against Mr. Reagan's visit to Bitburg. The issue was far from being as simple as you make it. The problem for many people was, would smoothing over the German past help Mr. Reagan to keep us alert to the dangers of the Communist present, or would it both logically and psychologically hinder that effort? It was Helmut Kohl, not the "liberals" you excoriate, who sought by implication to wipe away the distinction between the free German people and the SS. For those of us who, like yourself, wish to keep the anti-totalitarian principle alive and paramount, this was a dangerous and altogether unnecessary thing for him to do.

To Douglas L. Furth: Bitburg was *not* about forgiving the German people. That had been done long ago, not only by the United States but by the Jewish communities of the world. Bitburg was about including the SS in a gesture of brotherly commemoration. Why should anyone forgive the SS? To do so is not to express, but rather to make a meaningless thing of, one's humanity.

To Sam Shube: No doubt there is anti-Semitism to be found in this country—more of it, more openly expressed, than in many years. Is this cause for concern? Yes, and always must be. But I would caution you, as I cautioned Mr. Krasny, to reserve the term for those occasions where it really counts and really threatens. Otherwise, as has become

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the case with the term "racism" on the lips of certain blacks, it will come to stand, first, for whatever displeases us, and, second, for whatever we disagree with. The passage you quote from Patrick Buchanan, for instance, was an oversimple thought over-hastily articulated, but its real object was not the Jews but the double standard according to which it is okay to hate the Nazis but not okay to hate the Communists. Nor was Mr. Reagan's decision to go to Bitburg an expression of anti-Semitism—though it did in the end become a decision to "choose" the Germans over the Jews. Nor were the labor movement and the American Legion the only anti-Communist groups to condemn Mr. Reagan's visit to Bitburg—that is preposterous. On the other side, there were many people acting out of honest considerations of policy, considerations that you or I might deplore but are not entitled to call anti-Semitic. Would you call the labor movement anti-Semitic because it has misguidedly adopted the policy of affirmative action? Surely not. As for being "strangers in a foreign land"—wash out your mouth with soap.

To Philip Rothman: Affixing labels to people's arguments may be emotionally satisfying, but it does not in any way characterize—let alone begin to answer—them.

To Jordan C. Band: It is certainly permissible for you to dislike, and to oppose with all your might, neoconservative ideas. (It may not have escaped your notice that in this you are not entirely alone.) But I fail to see how, whatever the degree of your hostility, reverse racism or feeding the hungry enters into a discussion about Bitburg. My piece contained no "smear of Jewish liberals" or indeed of any "liberals." What I was talking about was an age-old and inbuilt tendency, or habit, of liberal thought to turn the specific into the general. And what I pointed out was that it was an especially odd thing for a self-proclaimed, committed conservative like Ronald Reagan to have been speaking in that sense like a liberal. I do, it is true, find this mindset to be the source of many of our difficulties in understanding and dealing with the world, not the least of them being the way it gives rise to other disquieting habits, like assuming that those who do not share your favorable view of this or that policy hold the views they do because they are less moral or "feeling." This habit of assumption is in fact what led you to remark that I was "distressed" over the fact that the President may have been embarrassed. Nowhere in what I actually said, or suggested, or even just implied, is there warrant for that particular observation. I am in any case grateful to you for providing so vivid an example of what I was trying to describe.

To Martha S. Cherkis: It is true that we are about to be drowned in babble, and that in the deluge, it is hard to hang onto the meaning of both words and events. But surely you cannot believe that President Reagan meant what he said about the SS being victims. He was in a spot, and grabbed for the nearest handy thing to say. As has happened with him more than once, the nearest was also the most unfortunate.

To Carol B. Miller: What I said about Dachau is simply that had the President gone there, he would have seen a gas chamber and an oven or two. Whether they were used at Dachau or only in the Eastern camps is perfectly irrelevant. To see that these instruments of mass death were of human proportion—which was the real point I was making—is to be indelibly reminded that the Holocaust was not some vast abstraction but the actual, intentional murder of millions of individual persons.

If visitors to Dachau are now being informed (I have not been there for some years) that the gas chamber was merely a disinfecting chamber and that Zyklon B was used as a preventive against typhus, then things are worse in Germany than one suspected.

And if I understand the rest of your letter correctly—I sincerely pray that I do not, and that you did not mean quite what you said—I must beg you to bethink yourself. Dachau, to be sure, was not one of the real "killing camps." Indeed, it was estimated that "only" around 100,000 people died there. One hundred thousand may not in Nazi terms be very impressive; in Baltimore, Maryland, however, it

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should at least give pause. How many killings would it take to constitute an indictable offense in your eyes? The "would rather forget," I am afraid, is rather spectacularly and frighteningly on the other foot—that is, if "forget" and not something more sinister is the word for it.

Finally, I am indebted to David C. Stolinsky and Frederic Wile for the added light they have thrown on a messy subject—and to Jackson Toby, not only for his kind words but for his timely reminder to us all of just what made the public quarrel about Bitburg possible in the first place. And to Henry Sherman, what can I offer but my plainest and simplest thanks?

Ethiopian Jews

To the Editor of Commentary:

In July, Commentary published an article by Edward Alexander, "Operation Moses," which questions the actions of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* [*AIU*] on behalf of the Ethiopian Falashas.

Mr. Alexander refers to two missions sent by our society to Abyssinia (as Ethiopia was then called), the first in 1867-68 under the direction of Joseph Halévy, the second in 1908 led by Haîm Nahum and Dr. Eberlin.

We do not know from what sources Mr. Alexander took his information on these expeditions, but we must correct several of his assertions which are not accurate.

1. Halévy's expedition is known from two letters and a report which, contrary to what Mr. Alexander says, the *Alliance* did not refuse to publish: this report figures *in extenso* in the *Bulletin semestrial de l'AIU*, first semester 1868, pp. 85-102; the preliminary letters of the Halévy mission appear in the *AIU* bulletin, second semester 1867, p. 17 and first semester 1868, pp. 56-60. These texts are available for consultation in Paris at the *Alliance* library, in Jerusalem at the Ben-Zvi Institute library, and at the Harvard University library (in microfiche). According to his own testimony, moreover, Halévy visited only one part of Abyssinia and described the life of the Falashas of other provinces on the basis of accounts that were brought to him.

2. Joseph Halévy actually referred in his report (p. 88) to the difficulties he encountered in persuading some of the Falasha tribes that he was a "white Jew"; but we cannot find any indication anywhere that his testimony was suppressed on his return to Paris or that the *Alliance* treated the two young Falashas he brought back with him as "slaves whom he had bought in the market of Massuah," as Mr. Alexander states. On the contrary, Narcisse Leven, secretary and future president of the *Alliance*, said in his report to the general assembly, January 11, 1869 (see *AIU* bulletin, first semester 1868, pp. 27-28), that the Falashas "belong to the great Israelite family.... [M. Halévy] has brought us a young Falasha whom we have placed in our preparatory school [the future *Ecole Normale Israélite Orientale*, founded in 1867] and who will return to his country, educated and capable of educating his co-religionists." However, the young man was not able to stand the European climate and had to be sent back to his own country.

3. For various reasons (the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71; the development of schools in the Mediterranean basin; political difficulties in Abyssinia, etc.), the *Alliance* had to abandon its humanitarian projects on behalf of the Falashas. But it did help in the publication of several works by Joseph Halévy, especially his famous "Prayer of the Falashas," written in the ancient Ethiopic language Ge'ez, as Mr. Alexander notes.

4. It was not until the summer of 1904 that Jacques Faitlovitch, a student of Joseph Halévy, was able to attempt an expedition of a few weeks to Abyssinia. This expedition, financed jointly by the *Alliance* and Baron Edmond de Rothschild, also brought back two young Falashas who were placed in the *Ecole Normale Israélite Orientale*. Two excerpts from Faitlovitch's report were published in the *AIU* bulletin for 1905, pp. 96-104. The complete report was published by Leroux, Paris, 1905.

5. In response to the development in Europe of a favorable current of opinion toward the Falashas, the *Alliance* sent a third mission in 1908, under the direction of Haîm Nahum, professor at the rabbinical seminary of Constantinople and future grand rabbi of Turkey, and a young doctor, Dr. Eberlin. The nature of this mission, which was to establish the size of the population and assess its social and economic situation, was set forth in the *AIU* bulletin for 1907, pp. 87-90, along with the text of the official letter sent to Emperor Ménélik, who received the two *Alliance* emissaries on March 6, 1908.

6. The Nahum-Eberlin report, which appeared in March 1909, was published in the *AIU* bulletin for 1908, pp. 100-137, accompanied by a map of their itinerary and photographs. It is completely incorrect to claim, as Mr. Alexander does, that this report denied the Jewish character of the Falashas. On the contrary, it made much of the great originality of their culture, of the precariousness of their political situation, and advised extreme caution in any future European cultural intervention in order to preserve what today we would call their "identity." The report advocated progressive waves of emigration to the capital of Italian Eritrea and the introduction of the Falashas to manual labor and to new agricultural techniques. Finally, for reasons of practicality, the report counseled against the creation of schools because of the extremely low density of the Falasha population, which was scattered over a vast territory.

While it is to be regretted that nothing concrete was attempted until quite recently to save the Falashas from their misery, the *Alliance* is nevertheless proud to have been the first international organization to affirm the Jewish character of these African tribes so long ignored by the general publish. Since to this day scholars themselves have not been able to resolve the question of the origins of the Falashas—are they indigenous, converted Africans, Semitic invaders who established themselves in Africa?—it is not up to the *Alliance* to take a position in regard to this problem.

Jacques Levy [Director]
Georges Weill [Curator of the Library and Archives]
L'Alliance Israélite Universelle
Paris, France

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read Edward Alexander's article with considerable interest, and would like to offer some comments concerning the unfortunate disclosure of the rescue operation of the Ethiopian Jews that led to its halt in January 1985.

Mr. Alexander writes that Arye Dulzin, chairman of the Jewish Agency, "all but revealed it [Israel's rescue effort] in a statement to the press in early Decem-

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ber." In fact, Mr. Dulzin made his disclosure even earlier, on November 21, 1984, in a speech to the American section of the World Zionist Organization, when he said:

> While I am not free to discuss it publicly, I can tell you that the Jewish Agency is preparing for a sudden jump in emigration. . . . One of the ancient tribes of Israel is due to return to its homeland. . . . We will take pride in what we have already achieved in this most difficult and complex operation.

What had indeed been an open secret in some circles quickly became a matter of public record and press attention—with ultimately devastating effect.

Mr. Alexander then states that ". . . the American and Israeli press had in general showed rare and admirable self-restraint in withholding the story. . . ." Yet if the press showed restraint prior to November 21, it certainly showed much less thereafter.

On November 23, the *Jewish Week* of New York carried a front-page story with the headline: "Reveal Plan for Rescue of Falashas; Israel Prepares for Absorption of Thousands of Ethiopian Jews." On November 28, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency carried a page-three story: "Dulzin: Jewish Agency Is Preparing for a Sudden Jump in Immigration," which clearly referred to the Ethiopian Jews. On December 6, despite the strenuous efforts of Israeli and American Jewish leaders, the Washington *Jewish Week* published a front-page article entitled: "An Ancient Tribe Returns Home: The Ethiopian Exodus Has Begun." Then, specifically citing "articles . . . in the Jewish press" and the Washington *Jewish Week* story in particular, the New York *Times*, which had indeed shown restraint by sitting on the story for a considerable time, published a front-page piece headlined "Airlift to Israel Is Reported Taking Thousands of Jews from Ethiopia."

The next day, in a particularly damaging story carried by leading newspapers in Miami, Philadelphia, and other major cities, William Beecher of the Boston *Globe* reported on a "dramatic, secret operation" involving "unmarked planes" and "boats pulling in surreptitiously along the Red Sea coast near Port Sudan" and "sympathetic Sudanese military men providing protection." He cited diplomatic sources reporting on the role of the U.S. as "intermediary in getting Sudanese officials and Israeli agents together to set up the complex logistics for the humanitarian mission." Beecher went on to say that "American officials also urged news organizations that found out about the operation, including the *Globe*, not to print the story prematurely. . . ." He even went so far as to quote an American official that, "We've got to get them [Ethiopian Jews in the Sudan] out as quickly as possible *before it comes to public attention* and the whole thing collapses" (emphasis added).

Almost beyond belief, this article was written when thousands of Ethiopian Jews were still languishing in camps and other thousands remained behind in their native villages. As a result of these revelations, individuals involved in the rescue operation were perilously exposed, and the already shaky

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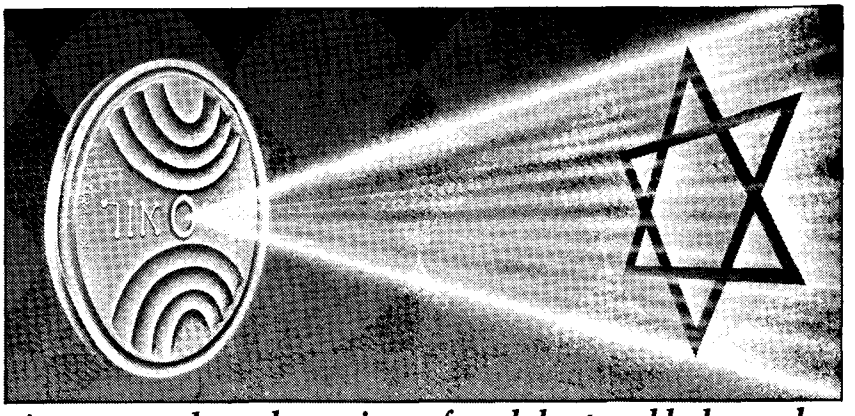

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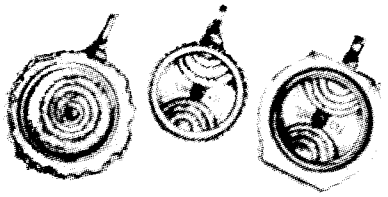

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Sudanese government, a moderate regime in the Arab world and a U.S. ally, could only be further exposed to internal and external opposition elements.

Yes, it is undoubtedly true that the original leak came from an Israeli leader and the halt to the operation resulted most immediately from the unfortunate Israeli government confirmation in early January. At the same time, however, I would question whether the American press, and more specifically the Anglo-Jewish press which initiated the coverage, acted with proper restraint, or whether it unwittingly contributed, to some degree at least, to the premature cancellation of what had up to that point been one of the most daring and humanitarian rescue operations in modern history.

Finally, it is well worth noting that while there were predictably vicious interpretations of the rescue operation offered by Soviet and Arab commentators, as well as the West German source cited by Mr. Alexander, there was, happily, recognition in other non-Jewish circles of its importance. Let me cite two examples. Marvin Arrington, president of the Atlanta City Council and a black, wrote in an op-ed piece in the Atlanta *Journal and Constitution* (January 20, 1985):

> As no group of people has ever done, the people of Israel have demonstrated that we are our brothers' keepers and that kinship transcends race. A tiny nation of approximately three million people has shown the world clearly that we can live by our loftiest ideals. As we recall the contribution of Martin Luther King, Jr. on the anniversary of his birth, I am proud to say, "Martin, look how well your dream works."

And, second, in a letter to Secretary of State Shultz (February 21, 1985) urging continued U.S. efforts to secure the emigration of those Ethiopian Jews who had not yet reached Israel, Julius Chambers, the director-general of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, wrote:

> Were the victims of the Ethiopian famine white, countless nations might have offered them refuge. But the people dying every day of starvation in Ethiopia and the Sudan are black, and in a world where racism is officially deplored by virtually every organized government, only one non-African nation has opened its doors and its arms. The quiet humanitarian action of the state of Israel, action taken entirely without regard to the color of those being rescued, stands as a condemnation of racism far more telling then mere speeches and resolutions.

Messrs. Arrington and Chambers eloquently remind us, in this the tenth year since the passage of the infamous Zionism-is-racism resolution, of the special significance of the effort undertaken by Israel, and supported by its friends, in seeking to bring home the Ethiopian Jewish community after more than 2,000 years of exile.

DAVID A. HARRIS
Deputy Director, International Relations
American Jewish Committee
New York City

EDWARD ALEXANDER writes:

I am grateful to Jacques Levy and Georges Weill for the fullness of their documentation of the *Alliance*'s involvement in the expeditions of Halévy, Faitlovitch, and Nahum to Ethiopia. I believe that the unflattering story, often repeated (for example, by Moshe Dor in *Ma'ariv*, January 11, 1985), of the *AIU*'s reception of Joseph Halévy's report and recommendations originated with Nahum Sokolow's portrait of Halévy. I ought to have specified that Halévy was unable to get the *AIU*'s permission to publish the report in book form.

Messrs. Levy and Weill mention the 1904 expedition of Faitlovitch but say nothing about his 1908 expedition, which began just a few months after Haîm Nahum, the representative of the *Alliance*, arrived in Addis Ababa. The reason the two expeditions coincided but did not join is, of course, well-known: Faitlovitch believed that the *Alliance* had ignored Halévy's recommendations and was still cool to the whole idea of involvement in the plight of the Ethiopian Jews. Faitlovitch disapproved of Rabbi Nahum because he did not speak Amharic, did not understand the extent of the bad impression he made upon the Ethiopian Jews by his traveling on the Sabbath, and allowed himself to be duped by local Ethiopian officials into underestimating the size of the Jewish population (by something like 87 percent). All this is fully recounted in Faitlovitch's *Quer durch Abessinien* (1910).

The Nicaraguan Election

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I wish to congratulate Paul Hollander on his excellent article, "The Newest Political Pilgrims" [August], and to call his and your readers' attention to the Latin American Studies Association [LASA] *Report of the Delegates to Observe the Nicaraguan Election of November 1984*. The report . . . was the product of an eight-day visit to Nicaragua organized by Richard Fagen (Stanford) and Thomas Walker (Ohio University). Fagen and Walker are co-chairmen of LASA's Task Force on Scholarly Relations with Nicaragua; they also happen to be national co-sponsors of U.S. Out of Central America, the pro-Sandinista lobby noted by Mr. Hollander.

The fifteen-member delegation toured Nicaragua in a rented bus between October 28 and November 5, 1984. During their brief visit, they conducted 45 one-to-two hour interviews with 45 "key informants," a large majority of whom were Sandinista government or party officials, foreigners who have come to Nicaragua to assist or advise the Sandinistas, other employees of the Sandinista government, and leaders of Marxist microfactions allied to the Sandinista party, the FSLN. Only seven of the interviewees were liberal, conservative, or Church critics of the regime. As luck would have it, the delegation was unable to interview anyone at *La Prensa* or the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP). The report does not mention having tried to contact the Nicaraguan Permanent Commission for Human Rights or the Nicaraguan Commission of Jurists.

No matter. In the collective judgment of the delegation, what the New York *Times* had denounced as a "sham election" was, on the contrary, "a model of probity and fairness." The delegation found the Sandinistas reasonable chaps who had made innumerable "concessions" to their domestic opposition in order to ensure a competitive election free of "fear and intimidation."

Press censorship, the report concluded, though "probably the weakest part in the Sandinistas' style of governance," was not strong enough to inhibit opponents of the regime. Those who boycotted the election did so under pressure from the Reagan administration, which,

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for purely ideological reasons, had set out "to undermine the Nicaraguan electoral process and to destroy its credibility in the eyes of the world."

In the eyes of the delegation, the election pitted seven parties—three to the Left and three to the Right of the FSLN—in a competitive process "in which the Nicaraguan voter had a wide range of options on major issues—considerably wider, for example, than in recent elections in El Salvador and Guatemala."

According to the report, opposition parties were allotted money, supplies, and television time to campaign. If the Sandinistas took advantage of their being "the dominant force in the present Nicaraguan political arena," they "did little more to take advantage of incumbency than incumbent parties everywhere (including the United States) routinely do, and considerably *less* than ruling parties in other Latin American countries traditionally have done" (emphasis in original).

Although the Sandinistas covered 93 percent of the precincts with poll watchers and none of the other participating parties had enough "active members" to cover any more than 10 percent of the precincts, "the delegation concluded that the disparity in poll-watcher coverage was unlikely to have affected the election results to any appreciable degree."

As for the "abstentionist opposition" led by Arturo Cruz, it consisted of "several small parties, the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), much of the Catholic Church hierarchy, the newspaper *La Prensa*, and two small trade-union federations." The report proceeded to discredit each of these in turn. The hatchet job was particularly shameful in the case of *La Prensa*, which was labeled "a virulently partisan newspaper" that "while not openly subversive, is unremittingly hostile to the incumbent government in virtually every article it publishes and which self-censors any news which reflects favorably upon the FSLN."

Even more despicable was the attempt to portray the "Church hierarchy" as being out of touch with the "grass roots," the "Christian base communities" from which liberation-theology priests and nuns serving the Sandinistas supposedly spring. In fact, these nominal clerics are mostly foreigners financed by the World Council of Churches.

The report notes that there "were no pre-election political opinion polls to demonstrate the relative strength of opposition parties" without explaining that this was due to a Sandinista prohibition on polling. Nevertheless, so sure was the delegation of Sandinista popularity that the report concluded that, even if the abstentionists had participated, the FSLN would still have won!

The LASA report includes many more statements and observations ranging from the contemptible to the absurd. I hope that Paul Hollander will examine it next time he takes up the topic of pilgrimages to Nicaragua.

ALFRED G. CUZÁN
University of West Florida
Pensacola, Florida

Jewish Forebodings

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While the current generation of younger sociologists looks for and stresses factors that encourage group cohesion and survival, Nathan Glazer in his article, "On Jewish Forebodings" [August], suggests that the process of assimilation still remains the basic force in the life of the American Jewish community.

Mr. Glazer's reintroduction of this term offers an opportunity to take a fresh look. Long before "assimilation" became part of formal sociology, the term was emotionally charged. Assimilation was considered to be a willful act aimed at the abandonment of Jewish culture and identity, a loss against which the Zionist movement promised protection. Over sixty years ago, the Chicago school of sociology turned the term into a concept free of any pejorative meaning, a concept designed to describe the final phase of the integration of European immigrants into the "host" culture. Unfortunately, this concept included two processes which should have been dealt with separately, namely, acculturation and acceptance. While acculturation, i.e. Americanization, was greatly encouraged, acceptance by the older settlers was more difficult to achieve. The most significant weakness of the concept of assimilation was the assumption that immigrants could not or should not make any contribution to the native culture.

Has acculturation been achieved? The answer is an unqualified yes. In a recent discussion, a survivalist ideologue insisted that there are significant differences between the American Jewish family and others. One participant put this issue to the test in a comparative analysis of survey data. He found that at the present time measurable differences cannot be found between the Jewish family and families of other religious backgrounds. What about acceptance? If one uses intermarriage as an index of acceptance, an analysis of the relevant data reveals that with increasing distance from immigration the rate of intermarriage increases substantially from the first to the third generation.

What about the assumption that Jews as members of a religious minority or immigrant group cannot or should not contribute significantly to the culture of the "host" society? Sometimes Jewish pop sociologists hold this belief and quote Heine's witty mot "*Wie es sich christelt, so jüdelt es sich*" ["As the Christians go, so go the Jews"]. If one is aware of the role of the Jews in the development of European capitalism, Heine's clever remark was at best half-true even in his own lifetime. Far from being the passive recipients of American culture, Jews have been pioneers in developing the urban mode of life. Since about 90 percent of American Jews settled in urban areas, they have been leaders in the creation of urban housing . . . as well as in community organization and health and welfare institutions. These physical and social inventions have made life more tolerable not only for Jews but also for the millions of newcomers who have moved from rural areas.

In conclusion I suggest that in the current stage of social development the concept of assimilation is no longer useful. More importantly, Mr. Glazer's forebodings are fully justified by the empirical evidence adduced here.

ERICH ROSENTHAL
Emeritus Professor
Queens College-CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Nathan Glazer's "On Jewish Forebodings" is a curious amalgam of admonitions and comforting assurances to American Jews. If Mr. Glazer's *obiter dicta* are to be tak-

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en seriously, they are a less than honest description of the past, and a doubtful presage of the future. His ruminations . . . on affirmative action graphically reveal the inadequacies of his article. . . .

Mr. Glazer has been an implacable foe of affirmative action, and this unyielding enmity has, in my judgment, hurt American white ethnics, not excluding American Jews. Mr. Glazer has, it would appear, been grossly insensitive to the aspirations of American white ethnics (excepting Jews), and, for that matter, usually oblivious to their very presence. As a result, he has misunderstood affirmative action and its deleterious effects on both American ethnics and Jews.

What Mr. Glazer has never understood is that Jews, as American white ethnics, should have been *included in*, not excluded from, affirmative-action programs. Past discrimination against American Jews was not solely because they were Jews but also because they were a burgeoning part of that despised Central and Southern European immigration to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. American white ethnics (and Jews *qua* ethnics) have, in American academia, shared and continue to share a legacy of discrimination and exclusion.

The experience of Italian Americans is classically instructive. In higher education, Italians have less representation than the Irish and the Jews. In the Harvard University Ladd-Lipset survey of the ethnic backgrounds of the American professoriate, the Irish accounted for 9 percent, the Jews 12 percent, and the Italians a minuscule 3 percent. And if one is disposed to play the statistical parity game, Italians (who constitute 10 percent of the population, or 20 million people), are starkly underrepresented as contrasted with Jews (some 5.5 million) who constitute 3 percent of the population. Still, the plain fact is that . . . the Jews command a majority identity in a minority presence, without the influence which endemic anti-Semites attribute to them.

For Italians, affirmative action has a compelling attraction, as it does for Poles, Greeks, and other ethnics whose representation in the colleges and universities is more minuscule than that of Italians. For blacks, who represent 3 percent of the professoriate, affirmative action has provided the means to achieve even this small, egregiously unjust underrepresentation. Succinctly, Ladd and Lipset observe: "With a few notable exceptions, little has happened to the American professoriate, in terms of its ethnic and religious makeup, in the years since World War II. There has been extraordinary growth, but the succeeding waves of newcomers closely resemble those who came before." In 1900 the American professoriate was 80-percent Germano-British in origin; in 1975 "people tracing their ancestry to the British Isles and Northern Europe [continued] to make up a full three-quarters of the professoriate." *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!*

FRANCESCO CORDASCO
Montclair State College
Upper Montclair, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Referring to *The Authoritarian Personality* (T. W. Adorno and others, 1950) Nathan Glazer says: "The research for these studies was conducted under the overall guidance of refugees from Europe; American social scientists worked on them, but often in a subordinate capacity." This is not correct. The chief architect of *The Authoritarian Personality* was Nevitt Sanford, a faculty member at the University of California, Berkeley. The research was initiated in collaboration with another American, a graduate student, Daniel Levinson. Theodor Adorno and Else Frenkel-Brunswik, European in origin, joined them later, when the research was under way. The quantitative facets of the research, the E (Ethnocentrism) and F (Fascism) Scales, for example, were characteristic of American psychology, not that of Central Europe.

Mr. Glazer also comments that "According to *The Authoritarian Personality*, anti-Semitism stemmed from a basic character structure linked to the competitiveness and pressures of capitalist society"; this is misleading as well. *The Authoritarian Personality* places relatively little emphasis upon social forces as compared to the influence of childhood experiences in the family and personality processes, in accord with psychoanalytic theory circa the 1930's and 1940's. So in 1973, in refutation of various sociological criticisms, Nevitt Sanford wrote: "Thus today, although I find little in the facts or theories of *The Authoritarian Personality* that seems fundamentally wrong, I have no difficulty in urging that we now stress the *interaction* of personality and culture, of psychodynamic and cognitive processes."

MERVIN B. FREEDMAN
San Francisco State University
San Francisco, California

NATHAN GLAZER writes:

Francesco Cordasco's argument is an original one, but it has been my position, which I have argued on various grounds, that affirmative action should be restricted to the smallest number of groups possible. I did not think American Jews or American Italians should be covered by it, and indeed did not think most of the groups that are covered should be. In this, the majority opinion of Jews and Italian Americans is with me.

Mervin B. Freedman may be right about the relative roles of the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality*. From the perspective of New York City, where I worked for a while in 1944-45 for Max Horkheimer, and saw the development of the studies of prejudice he directed for the American Jewish Committee, and taking into account the earlier work of his group in German on authority and personality, it certainly appeared that the dominant strand in the work was provided by the Frankfurt school. I will be less obliging on Mr. Freedman's second point. Anyone can read *The Authoritarian Personality*. My characterization is correct, if summary.

Addendum

A footnote on page 41 in Fernanda Eberstadt's "Reading Primo Levi" (October) mentioned a forthcoming collection of Primo Levi's stories. The title of this book has now been changed by the publisher (Summit) from *Lilith and Other Stories* to *Moments of Reprieve*—ED.

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Schistosomiasis affects as many as 200 million people in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Puerto Rico and Latin America. It is often called "snail fever" because at one stage of their life cycle, *Schistosoma* worms infect snails that live on the bottom of rivers and streams. These parasites invade the skin of humans who drink, wash or swim in contaminated waters. They can cause severe itching, fever, diarrhea, and eventually irreversible damage to the liver. For 16 years, researchers visiting the island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean have been testing the practicality of various methods of control. Three approaches have proven to be most effective.

First, a public health team sprayed the rivers and streams of St. Lucia to get rid of infested snails. New plumbing facilities were constructed to assure a supply of uncontaminated water. Finally, treatment of people carrying the parasite was greatly facilitated by a drug developed and supplied by Pfizer. While previous treatments had to be given by injection, this drug was given orally only once, making it much simpler to reach a large number of people. The total control and elimination of the parasite is not yet a reality, but this combined medical and environmental program has done much to make life better for the people of the island.

Developing a drug such as this is a significant task that takes a decade or more and tens of millions of dollars. It generally involves the synthesis of hundreds of compounds in the organic chemistry laboratory. These compounds are then screened for antiparasitic activity. If one or more of them shows promise, the next step is to do toxicity studies and learn all about how the potential new drugs behave in laboratory animals. Only after completion of extensive, time-consuming animal studies can the drug be tested for safety and effectiveness in humans. And clinical trials in human patients can last for several years. If the clinical trials indicate that the drug should be made available, new technology must be developed to produce it on a mass basis, and in cases like this, with little if any profitability for the developer.

Drug research and development isn't always "good theater." And it's largely a team endeavor generally without charismatic heroes. The days of Paul Ehrlich and his "magic bullet" are long past. The work of the pharmaceutical industry isn't usually the stuff of TV documentaries. More often, the industry has been the silent partner of government agencies, physicians, nurses and their associates working together to improve public health in St. Lucia and other developing countries.

In the Third World, pharmaceuticals are perhaps even more important than in advanced industrial countries. Often they are the only form of advanced medical technology which is practicable. Other forms of care, such as surgery, are often too cumbersome and too demanding of scarce resources. Drugs, by comparison, are portable, relatively inexpensive and comparatively simple to use.

The vast majority of drugs for the Third World and also for developed countries originate in the pharmaceutical industry. The government agencies do not have the broad expertise or resources for drug development, and medical schools and universities have different missions. Only the major research/pharmaceutical companies have the necessary skills and resources. Most manufacturers of generic drugs lack the research capabilities to create new drugs and test them for safety and efficacy. And that's only one reason an economically viable research-based pharmaceutical industry is important to all of us.

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The New Khmer Rouge

Ross H. Munro

APRIL 13, 1974. Three U.S. Navy officers are riding in a jeep along a new road hugging the boundary of the Subic Bay naval base in the Philippines. All three are Seabees—Navy construction men—and their destination is a half-mile farther north where a Seabee battalion is continuing work on the road. Suddenly shots ring out. One officer is killed instantly. A moment later, the two others, badly wounded, are finished off with shots to the head fired at point-blank range. Later, Philippine intelligence informs U.S. authorities that the Navy men had been ambushed by members of the still fledgling Communist guerrilla group, the New People's Army (NPA). The guerrilla leader responsible for the attack, as he had been for previous attacks on U.S. military personnel stationed in the Philippines, is a twenty-six-year-old former engineering student who calls himself Commander Bilog. His real name is Rodolfo Salas.

RODOLFO SALAS has long since graduated from being the leader of a five-man NPA hit squad. Now thirty-seven, he is the ruthless and brilliant leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), presiding over the fastest growing, most threatening, and arguably the most brutal Communist insurgency in the world today. U.S. analysts believe that if the corrupt and exhausted regime of President Ferdinand Marcos remains in power and the situation in the Philippines continues to deteriorate at its current pace, Rodolfo Salas could one day be leading the People's Democratic Republic of the Philippines, the name the Communists have already chosen for their new state.

Yet only a tiny minority of Filipinos has ever heard of Salas and only a handful of non-Communist politicians has met him during the eight years he has been chairman of the CPP. Most politically-minded Filipinos, if asked, will say that the leader of the Communists in the Philippines is Jose Maria Sison, who founded the CPP in 1968. But Sison, a poet, university teacher, and Maoist ideologue, has been languishing in jail since 1977, his influence largely eroded. It has been Salas the engineer who has turned Sison's vision of a nationwide Communist insurgency into a full-fledged reality. From a few thousand party members and guerrilla fighters who were at most a serious nuisance in Sison's day, Salas has been instrumental in building the Communist movement into a formidable force. Today, the CPP credibly boasts that it has "way over" 30,000 members, while the NPA has "way beyond" 20,000 guerrillas, now fighting in at least 59 of the nation's 73 provinces.

In news reports from the Philippines, nearly all the responsibility for the Communist upsurge is being given to Ferdinand Marcos. And indeed he has played an essential role. During his twenty years in power, the country has suffered from colossal mismanagement of its economy, corruption akin to looting, and the near destruction of the nation's basic political institutions. Without all this help from Marcos, it seems, the Communists would have remained about as inconsequential as they are today in, say, Indonesia or Thailand.

Yet by trashing the Marcos regime and blaming it alone for the Communist upsurge, we fail to give proper attention and credit to the Communists themselves. For it has been their fanaticism, bequeathed by Sison, combined with their increasing ruthlessness and opportunism since Salas became leader, that have also proved essential to their success.

While Salas shares Sison's original radical goal of transforming the Philippines into a Communist dictatorship, he seems to be far less concerned than the party's Maoist founder about what methods are used to achieve that goal. Under Salas, the Communist guerrillas are waging a largely unreported campaign of terror, assassination, and torture in the Philippine countryside. As a radical but independent leftist who knows both the CPP and the NPA well says: "I'm afraid we might be staring at a Pol Pot future." In the cities, the working style of the CPP is so paranoid, rigid, and totalitarian that even left-wing nationalists have quit anti-Marcos alliances controlled by the Communists. The most respected of these independent nationalists, former Senator Jose Diokno, states: "They [the Communists] feel they're so close to victory that they only need two

ROSS H. MUNRO has been reporting on the Philippines since 1978 as a *Time* correspondent in Southeast Asia and in Washington, D.C. His most recent visit to the Philippines took place this past July. Currently, he is New Delhi bureau chief for the Time-Life News Service.

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or three of us." Abroad, the once Maoist CPP has dropped its pro-Chinese stance and, with Salas taking the lead, is avidly courting the Soviet Union for official recognition and for financial and military aid.

Most chilling of all is the rapidly mounting evidence of the NPA's reign of terror, rivaling the Khmer Rouge in savagery if not yet in scale. Most of the reports come from the countryside, where the more than 20,000 Communist guerrillas, with far less than one modern rifle per man, have a largely demoralized, corrupt, and ineffective Philippine military tied up in knots. From the foothills of the Cagayan Valley in northern Luzon to the city slums of southern Mindanao, the NPA continues to tighten its hold. That its primary means of accomplishing this is terror seems well known among leftists, civil-rights lawyers, rural parish priests, and others whose anti-Marcos credentials give them rare access to information about how the NPA really operates.

Typical is a leftist professor in Manila whose radical teachings have helped inspire many students to join Communist-front groups like the League of Filipino Students. Recently, several of his students won much-sought-after invitations to visit NPA strongholds in various parts of the countryside and view the revolution first-hand for a couple of weeks. But, recounts this professor, many returned sickened and appalled by what they had witnessed. They watched as Communist guerrillas killed "suspected informers" before an audience of villagers. "But it's not just an execution. It's cruel, slow, painful." The professor demonstrates how the guerrillas stab the victim in the legs, buttocks, back, shoulders, and stomach before plunging a dagger into his heart. "Is this happening in a particular region of the country?" the professor is asked. "All over," is his pained reply.

"Suspected informer" is a phrase heard again and again in accounts of how the NPA holds sway over thousands of villages. The NPA readily applies the condemnatory label to a villager who turns down the "invitation" of a newly arrived NPA squad to a lecture in a nearby hut on the evils of capitalism. Or to a minor local official who speaks out against the Communists. Or to a peasant who resists paying NPA "taxes."

In a village in southern Luzon this spring, a Philippine journalist accompanying an NPA band witnessed a man being led away for execution, again on grounds that he was a suspected informer. The journalist, vaguely sympathetic to the NPA, pointed out to a guerrilla that the case against the man, a recent arrival in the village, was a circumstantial one, and flimsy at that. The guerrilla's response was a dismissive shrug. The journalist accompanied the NPA to several villages in the area and discovered that in every one, no matter how small, the NPA had executed people.

Desperate for more funds to feed and arm their burgeoning ranks, NPA units are applying their terrorist methods to extorting money from rich and poor alike. No one seems exempt anymore. Early this year, for example, when Philippine Protestant missionaries in the province of Surigao del Norte resisted NPA demands for a hefty share of their Sunday collections, an NPA squad invaded their chapel during Sunday services where they shot and killed one pastor in front of his congregation, beat up a "deaconess" at another chapel, and, that night, tracked down and killed another pastor.

As law and order continue to deteriorate, NPA hit squads (the foreign media have adopted the NPA's slightly heroic-sounding name, Armed City Partisans, for such groups) are operating with increasing ease in urban areas. Recent targets have included unsympathetic Philippine journalists (whose deaths draw little attention compared with those of anti-Marcos journalists). In the city of Cebu, the NPA issued statements taking credit for shooting and killing two outspokenly anti-Communist radio commentators. The Communists are also turning their guns on the leaders of democratic trade unions. According to Ernesto Herrera, the courageous general secretary of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), the Communists began killing rival labor leaders last year. "We've lost nine [TUCP leaders killed by the Communists] in the last ten months," he reports.

There is also a steady stream of official accounts of NPA atrocities from the Philippine military that are carried mainly in pro-government newspapers. Such reports have little impact because the credibility of the military and the pro-Marcos media has long since been squandered. But independent sources say that the government accounts hardly do justice to the full horror of the violence perpetrated by the NPA in the countryside.

Here are a few of the more recent military accounts of NPA violence, confirmed by secondary sources:

- In trying to establish its control over a remote gold-rush site in the province of Davao del Norte, the NPA executed at least 45 people in a period of less than five months, ending this March. Most of the victims were retrieved from a body pit. Many showed signs of having been tortured; and indeed, eyewitnesses confirmed that the NPA had tortured many of the victims before killing them.
- On June 15 of this year three NPA guerrillas grabbed Corazon Pacana Coloso, a minor municipal official in northern Mindanao who had the misfortune of being the provincial governor's sister. The guerrillas told the hastily assembled townspeople that they were convening a "people's court." They accused her of corruption, pro-

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nounced her guilty, and then shot her in the head. She died instantly.

• The military's statistics show that the NPA killed 138 local Philippine officials in 1984. And the number of such killings this year is running ahead of last. No one appears to be challenging these numbers, even though a good case can be made that they understate the reality. Some of the local officials being executed are undoubtedly corrupt by Western standards. But because the aim of the killings is not to clean up corruption but to terrorize officials and villagers alike into knuckling under to the NPA, strong and popular local officials are being killed also. Says a U.S. official saddened by *déjà vu*: "It's just like Vietnam. The guerrillas are killing the worst and the best local officials. They don't worry about the mediocre ones; they know they'll go along."

• Inevitably, the increasingly violent NPA is turning on itself. Intelligence sources say the NPA recently executed several of its own members in southern Luzon in the belief that they were government agents. They discovered, too late, that they were mistaken. In the Davao area of Mindanao, Brigadier General Dionisio Tan-Gatue claims the NPA killed 28 or 29 of its own men who had been wounded in an encounter May 14 and were slowing down the escape of the other guerrillas.

ALTHOUGH the NPA's reign of terror is largely ignored by foreign correspondents and the anti-Marcos media, it is no secret among Communist-party members. On the final day of my most recent trip to the Philippines, I told a key member of the CPP that I had repeatedly heard horror stories about NPA terror and violence directed against civilians in almost every part of the Philippines. He offered not a word of argument, not even a suggestion that the stories might be overblown. "It is the biggest problem we have right now," he conceded. Yet evidently only a minority of his fellow members agree that it is a problem. The issue of NPA brutality toward civilians was raised at a clandestine meeting of national CPP and NPA cadres in late 1984. The outcome then was inconclusive. The belated response of Salas and the top CPP leadership came in the CPP's official, underground newspaper, *Ang Bayan* ("The Nation"), this spring. Charges of NPA abuses amount to "slander," *Ang Bayan* stated, because everyone knows that the NPA has "iron discipline."

Few but the most naive city-bound party members would believe such a claim. Instead, typical party members seem to have accepted the fact that they are players in an increasingly violent drama. These days, the phrase "blood debts will be paid in blood" rolls off the lips of party members as easily as it does off the pages of *Ang Bayan*. Such members have stopped making distinctions among the people who are murdered by the NPA. As three party members made clear in a discussion with me, by definition anyone killed by the NPA must be a "*demonyo*"—a term that the NPA initially used to describe enemy spies but which has evolved into a label for anyone the NPA decides to execute. *A Guide to Establishing a Mass Base in the Rural Areas*, a manual prepared for the exclusive use of party cadres inside the NPA, makes it clear that the guerrillas have party approval to kill virtually anyone they want. Among the broadly defined categories of people who can be executed are "enemies of the people, spies, and unreformed elements who hinder the development of the revolutionary movement in the *barrio*."

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) claims that the NPA is currently killing more than 130 civilians a month, not including local government officials. Most of the civilians are victims of so-called liquidations, meaning murders, assassinations, or executions. Although the Marcos regime's statistics are often suspect, these numbers seem to be "clean." For one thing, the same military reports that tally these civilian deaths contain other statistics on NPA gains that are remarkably consistent with claims that the NPA is making in its underground publication, *Pulang Bandila* ("Red Flag"). And dissidents in the armed forces who are otherwise critical of how the military conducts its business say the reporting of NPA killings is carefully corroborated by death certificates or eyewitness accounts.

BUT while these numbers are apparently "clean," they fall far short of the truth. Without doubt, the actual number of civilian liquidations carried out by the NPA is much higher, quite possibly four or five times higher, than the military claims. The explanation is that NPA killings in remote *barrios* where its power is greatest are rarely reported, particularly not to the untrusted military. A peasant who journeys into town to tell officials of a Communist-ordered execution in his *barrio* is inviting, at best, a clumsy military raid on his village or, much worse, an NPA accusation that he is an informer.

If one ventures into areas in the Philippines where NPA guerrillas are active, the story is always the same. Where the NPA prevails, a code of fearful silence prevails: even if the NPA kills your brother or your best friend, you do not report it. When the NPA killed one of those Protestant missionaries in his home in Surigao del Norte, the guerrillas told his wife that she too would be killed if she reported the killing to the authorities. The civilian killings that do become widely known are usually those that the NPA wants widely known—where the guerrillas make an example of a victim by staging a pre-execution "trial" or by simply leaving his bullet-ridden body in the town square.

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But usually only the local villagers hear about the killing. In a small city in Bicol, the southern tail of Luzon, a young and well-informed lawyer who often defends dissidents says that an NPA unit was killing civilians in a village just a few miles from his home for more than three years before he or anyone else in the city heard about it. The villagers were simply too frightened, he says, to report the deaths.

In the province of Davao del Norte, where the NPA controls much of the population, I asked Father Eligio Bianchi why he and other churchmen in the area had not reported the many killings by the NPA as diligently as they had reported the relatively few killings by the military. Bianchi replied that, while he believed all killings were equally wrong, he rarely heard from frightened villagers about NPA killings. "Now and then you might hear someone whisper that somebody had been killed by the NPA, but that's all. They didn't want to talk about it."

This fearful silence prevailing in the countryside wherever the NPA is active is almost completely overlooked by middle-class Manilans and other Filipinos who still live far from the everyday insurgency. Filipinos, they themselves readily concede, are traditionally a garrulous lot, chronically unable to keep a secret, and they still take it as a given that they are the recipients of a free and plentiful flow of information. Manila's upper classes in particular pride themselves on knowing what is happening in their family's home province on the basis of an occasional visit from a retainer, relative, or friend. But the visitor probably lives in the provincial capital and knows less about what is going on in the surrounding countryside than the Bicol lawyer.

II

But the prevailing silence only partly explains why NPA brutality is largely ignored by the foreign-press contingent in Manila as well as by the independent or anti-Marcos newspapers that have been thriving in the Philippines during the past two years. Another important part of the explanation is that the media can learn nothing about NPA atrocities from Philippine organizations that claim to be committed to civil liberties and human rights.

By far the most prominent of these groups is Task Force Detainees (TFD). In an almost incredible feat of public relations, the openly pro-Communist TFD has become recognized as the leading defender of human rights in the Philippines. Its accounts and statistics regarding "political prisoners" and the frequent abuses committed by the Philippine military are cited by Amnesty International, the Lawyers' Committee for International Rights, and even the U.S. State Department. And its claims and statistics find their way into innumerable articles by foreign correspondents reporting from the Philippines.

Despite its international standing, the TFD has consistently ignored NPA killings and other abuses of civilians. It resolutely refuses to investigate, report, or act on killings by the NPA. In my visits to the TFD offices in Manila over several years, officials have offered several explanations for their one-sided view of what constitutes a human-rights abuse. TFD spokesman Fidel Agcaoili made it clear in an interview this summer that the TFD is interested in exposing only those human-rights abuses that reflect badly on the military. "Definitely our main line of inquiry [is] human-rights abuses being committed by the government." Agcaoili referred in a dismissive tone to "the alleged abuses being committed by the NPA," then quickly caught himself and said, "No, I won't say any more." But as far as the TFD's position on people who take up arms and join the NPA is concerned, Agcaoili readily volunteers that "we respect their right to do so."

That Task Force Detainees has a benign view of the New People's Army should surprise no one; the TFD has never made a secret of its politics. A visit to its offices in suburban Manila finds activists, widely reputed even by leftists to be Communists, wandering in and out and being treated by the TFD staff with everyday familiarity. Staff members talk about their plans to attend rallies organized by a Communist-front group. The head of the TFD, Sister Mariani Dimaranan, has remained on the executive board of BAYAN, one of the most tightly controlled of those fronts, even though virtually every independent leftist on the executive has quit in protest against the CPP's heavy-handed domination. Gerardo Bulatao, for several years the key administrator of the TFD's parent organization, the Association of Major Religious Superiors, was sentenced this year to twenty years in jail after the government made a strong case that he had played an important role in the Communist insurgency on the island of Samar. The TFD's fortnightly publication, *Political Detainees Update*, usually devotes its front page to highly favorable reports of the activities of BAYAN and other Communist-party fronts, like KMU, the labor alliance. Headlines use CPP terminology—"U.S.-Marcos Dictatorship"—to describe the regime.

The TFD takes its heavy ideological baggage along in pursuing its main task, which is chronicling the human-rights abuses committed by the Marcos regime and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The pursuit is relentlessly well-organized. The TFD currently has a staff of 280 and a large budget. Most of the money comes from foreign church-related organizations, but the TFD refused to answer both oral and written questions this summer about the origin and amount of the donations and the size of its total budget.

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As countless news reports from the Philippines have made clear, the TFD has no shortage of raw material to work with in building its case against the Marcos regime. There are many documented instances of the Philippine military and other government security forces abducting, torturing, and killing Communist suspects. But even here, the TFD constantly plays with the facts. Victims of the military are regularly portrayed not as members of the NPA or the CPP who are trying to overthrow the government by force but merely as "farmers, . . . fishermen, . . . students" implicitly innocent of any wrongdoing. In many cases, the most cursory investigation would reveal that a victim of the military's mistreatment was an NPA guerrilla or a key NPA informer. Crucial facts such as these could not possibly justify a killing by the military. But the TFD's omission of such facts represents a conscious attempt to suppress an important part of the story for political reasons.

This was so when the TFD portrayed an ugly mass killing that occurred on the island of Negros in 1980 which, more than any other single incident, marked the Marcos regime internationally as brutal and murderous. In the spring of 1980, in the rural municipality of Kabankalan in the province of Negros Occidental, several peasants were killed by military units acting at the behest of a local political boss. In the protests and publicity emanating from the TFD and other human-rights organizations, two of the victims came to symbolize the injustice. Alex Garsales and Herman Moleta were portrayed as simple farmers who had been murdered because they were active members of the local branch of Basic Christian Communities, which in turn was portrayed as a Christian form of community organization for the poor. Yet a left-wing but non-Communist priest in Negros told me that it was well known in Kabankalan that the two men were key figures in the NPA organizational structure in their mountain village. Another leftist, with close ties to the CPP and first-hand knowledge of the situation in Negros, said it was taken for granted that the Basic Christian Communities of Negros formed "the basic infrastructure for the NPA." (This is by no means true everywhere in the Philippines. For instance, Basic Christian Communities in Bukidnon province in Mindanao that were begun under the leadership of Bishop Francisco Claver are wary of both the regime and the NPA.) But there was never a hint of this either in TFD literature, or in a 1982 Amnesty International pamphlet that described the incident, or in a New York *Times* article (January 29, 1981) about the case.

In addition to suppressing crucial information, the TFD's reports also artificially inflate the extent of political violence for which the authorities are responsible. The TFD does this by refusing to make clear distinctions between persons killed by the military for political reasons and those killed by a variety of armed groups because they are involved in criminal activities, economic disputes, or even personal quarrels. Agcaoili conceded, for instance, that the TFD would define as political the killing of a peasant involved in a land dispute. After grouping together a wide variety of killings in a countryside beset for centuries with rampant violence, the TFD then suggests that all the violence is somehow connected to the regime's current counterinsurgency efforts.

What discredits the TFD's reports even more is that, even where there are virtually no facts available, it is ready to blame a murder on the authorities. This is particularly true in the TFD's tally of "salvagings," a uniquely Philippine term for an incident in which the military kills a civilian in cold blood because he is a suspected Communist.

Here, for instance, is the TFD's full account (in *Political Detainees Update*, May 15, 1985) of a recent case it classified as a salvaging:

> Butuan City—An unidentified man was found dead along KM 8 of the National Highway in Ampayon at 5:30 A.M., March 17. The victim was approximately 30 years old, 5'4" and of fair complexion. He was wearing denim pants and a red T-shirt. The victim suffered stab wounds all over his body.

The TFD has less opportunity to manipulate the statistics concerning "political prisoners." Here, each prisoner is a confirmed resident of a prison detention center. The TFD's own statistics show that the number of political prisoners peaked in 1983 and has been declining ever since, from 851 on January 1 of this year to 695 on July 15. It is important to understand that many of these prisoners are picked up in raids on guerrilla strongholds and held for only a short period. The majority of the 695 prisoners have been in jail for less than one year, many for just a few days.

It is appropriate to call these people "prisoners of war" rather than political prisoners. There seems to be universal agreement in the Philippines that virtually all the long-term prisoners are NPA guerrillas or Communist-party members actively involved in trying to overthrow the regime. The TFD itself implicitly conceded this by distributing a statement this July saluting "the political prisoners who dare risk their freedom for the sake of our people's liberation." In other words, these are prisoners of war captured in the midst of a fierce, nationwide insurgency.

WHAT the TFD's tally really tells us is how pitifully ineffective the Armed Forces of the Philippines have become. After fighting Communist guerrillas for more than a decade, they have succeeded in capturing only some 200 CPP and NPA members important enough or threatening enough to keep in jail.

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Nor, by the standards of rural insurgencies elsewhere in the world today, is the Philippine military particularly brutal. The language used in TFD reports ("state terrorism . . . escalating military abuses . . . alarmingly rampant salvaging . . .") and the tenor of some news reports suggest that the Philippines is akin to military-ruled Argentina or Guatemala. That is far from the truth. Even if the TFD's inflated statistics are used, the rate of political killings and disappearances over the past decade is no more than one-fiftieth that of Guatemala.

In fact, the Philippine military is no longer marauding much around the countryside. Mostly the soldiers are huddling in their barracks, demoralized and on the defensive, while the NPA extends its reign of terror. Many so-called combat units no longer have the gasoline or even the boots to move around. One statistic sums up the portrait of an almost defeated military: a minuscule 2 percent of the clashes between the AFP and the NPA during the first half of this year were initiated by the military. Two-thirds of the clashes were initiated by the Communist guerrillas. The remaining incidents were classified as "encounters," a catch-all term that includes incidents where the soldiers of the two sides stumble into each other.

Significantly, the Philippine military units most often on the offensive against the NPA are the very units most trusted and respected by the people in the countryside—the Marines and Scout Rangers. But these groups are a minority within the AFP; the majority of the armed forces is composed of passive, corrupt, and demoralized units. It is these units that are driving rural Filipinos into a sullen alienation that makes continuing Communist gains almost certain. They are led by officers who siphon off defense-ministry funds, sell their units' services to provincial political bosses or land-grabbers, or use their power to muscle into local business. The enlisted men, understanding full well the connection between their officers' wealth and their own lack of adequate food and clothing, run petty but vicious protection rackets in the towns, steal chickens in the villages, and, at checkpoints on the roads, demand payoffs from farmers bringing their produce to market. Shunned by civilians, the enlisted men express their frustration in drinking and fighting.

When a demand for action against the guerrillas comes down the command structure, a hapless lieutenant is dispatched to a village where he may grab the first two young men in sight and threaten to beat them unless they reveal the identity and whereabouts of the local NPA. Even villagers terrorized by the NPA and inclined to give information to the military know that the lieutenant will not be there the next day to help protect them from an NPA death sentence for being an informer. In short, the people are learning every day that the military cannot be trusted or relied upon. An army like that cannot win a guerrilla war.

III

The roots of that guerrilla war can be traced to the mid-1960's when a group of young radicals began coalescing at the University of the Philippines. At their center was Jose Maria Sison, first a student and then a lecturer at the university, who had joined the old Moscow-line Communist party, then as now referred to as the PKP.

In late 1964, Sison founded *Kabataang Makabayan* (KM, or Nationalist Youth). Although KM was organized as the PKP's youth wing, it was first and foremost Sison's organization. The intense, brilliant, energetic, and disputatious Sison recruited and trained a phalanx of loyalists who formed the hard core of KM. Almost from the beginning, it seems, Sison chafed under PKP leaders he viewed as old failures. The heady politics of China's cultural revolution energized and legitimized his discontent and, by 1967, Sison had completed his first draft of a history of the PKP that incisively dissected and condemned the party's failure since 1942 under the leadership of the three Lava brothers. This draft, *Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party*, became one of the founding documents of the originally Maoist CPP. Polemical and one-sided as it is, it remains the best available history of the PKP.

In April 1967, the Moscow-oriented PKP leadership expelled Sison and his supporters from the party. Almost immediately they formed their own provisional Politburo and issued a May Day statement hailing China's cultural revolution. But it was not until the day after Christmas 1968, when Sison and ten trusted comrades secretly gathered in Pangasinan province and opened what they called a "Congress of Reestablishment," that the new Communist Party of the Philippines was formally founded. The name given to the CPP's first meeting underlined Sison's contention that the old PKP was no longer a legitimate Communist party.

By now the CPP might have been a defunct and forgotten Maoist sect if Sison had not found Bernabe Buscayno. Commander Dante, as he is to this day better known, was the leader of a small group of guerrillas who were among the remnants of the 12,000 Huks who had challenged the Philippine government in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Dante had an apparently well-deserved reputation as a ruthless and well-practiced killer but, by all accounts, he wanted to devote his talents to revolution, not to serving the criminal syndicate into which the Huk hierarchy had degenerated. When the two would-be makers of revolution joined forces, Dante had his ideology and Sison

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had his army. The New People's Army was founded on March 29, 1969, with 35 rifles and handguns, the discipline code of China's Red Army, and Mao's strategy of protracted people's war.

There was a slavish quality in the Maoist cant ("punish the evil gentry . . . establish firmest relations with Albania") that was woven into the CPP's founding manifesto, *Programme for a People's Democratic Revolution*. But the "central task" of the CPP then as now was straightforward: "Seizing political power through armed revolution."

Amid the Maoist jargon and formulas in the CPP's early documents there was only a hint of Sison's analytical and visionary mind. That became more evident in 1970 in *Philippine Society and Revolution*, his comprehensive Marxist critique of what ailed the Philippines, which contained a hint of the Maoist prescription that he had in mind for its cure.

SISON'S most important contribution to the literature of the Philippine revolution was published in 1974. With *Specific Characteristics of Our People's War*, Sison presented his fellow Philippine Communists with the strategic game plan they have been following ever since. At that time, Marcos was at the peak of his power and the CPP and the NPA together numbered no more than 3,000. But Sison saw victory ahead. He believed that the NPA could defeat the Philippine military slowly but surely by creating guerrilla strongholds in the mountains and hills of every major island. "In the long run," he reassured his doubting comrades, "the fact that our country is archipelagic will turn out to be a great advantage for us and a great disadvantage for the enemy. The enemy shall be forced to divide his attention and forces not only to the countryside but also to so many islands."

Sison believed that the Huks under PKP leadership had seriously blundered by effectively confining their guerrilla warfare to the island of Luzon. This allowed the Philippine military to concentrate its counterinsurgency forces there. It was Sison's idea to establish guerrilla fronts in all the major islands of the Philippines, dispersing the armed forces throughout the archipelago and then gradually grinding them down.

Sison had a special role in mind for the largest island in the south. "The long-term task of our Mindanao forces is to draw enemy forces from Luzon and destroy them." The supremely confident Sison issued this master plan at a time when not a single NPA guerrilla band was active in Mindanao. With fanatic dedication, the Communists would try again and again and finally succeed in achieving Sison's goal of turning Mindanao into the military meatgrinder it is today. In early 1971, the CPP dispatched a lone student radical, Benjamin de Vera, to the city of Davao in eastern Mindanao. By the end of that year, de Vera had sworn in three party members and they had recruited 30 candidate members. A few months after Marcos declared martial law on September 21, 1972, the CPP put together a small guerrilla unit to test the revolutionary waters in the countryside between Davao and the city of Cotabato. By the end of 1973, party documents reveal, this unit had been virtually wiped out.

But the CPP and the NPA persevered. More former student radicals were sent to Mindanao to "integrate with the masses" and to organize small villages. The NPA began over again, but painfully slowly. By July 1975, again according to party documents, the NPA in Mindanao consisted of only seven men with seven guns. It seemed that most of the young, educated Communists who came from the cities ended up dying. By mid-1976, 300 of the first 370 party members in Mindanao had died, dropped out, defected, or been detained. Elsewhere in the Philippines—in Isabela province and the Cagayan Valley in northern Luzon, and on the islands of Negros and Samar—the former student activists, along with the few members of the rural lumpenproletariat they could recruit, were doing only a little better. One pro-Communist account of the guerrilla fighting in northern Luzon reported that the life expectancy of an NPA member in those days was three years.

IT WAS during this period—the early to mid-1970's when the Philippine economy was booming and Marcos was at the height of his power—that the highly favorable image of the New People's Army became fixed in the minds of the many middle-class Filipinos outside the guerrilla zones. The image was grounded partly in reality but to a substantial extent, even in those days, in myth. The fact that countless student radicals with comfortable backgrounds and promising futures were dying or going to prison for their cause made a deep impression on many middle- and upper-class Filipinos. Adrift in an increasingly cynical and materialistic society, privileged and educated Manilans often viewed the fanaticism of the Communists as an enviable virtue. To this day, an upper-class Manila dinner party seems incomplete until a guest, who invariably has no first-hand knowledge of how the guerrillas operate, begins speaking in admiring tones of the young Communists in the hills and prisons. The other guests nod knowingly and approvingly as dollar-a-day servants hover over them. Even politically moderate activists like Agapito (Butz) Aquino, brother of the assassinated political leader Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino, see something to admire in the fanatic dedication of the Communists. "I have always been impressed by the conviction of these guys. . . . I envy these guys . . . they're struggling for a philosophy they believe in. . . ."

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Many Filipinos came to think that if the Communists' fanaticism was selfless then it must also be benign. So they were instant believers in the myths surrounding how the NPA operated: guerrillas were idealistic students who won over the peasants by providing them with medical care (heavy on the acupuncture) and with political instruction that opened their eyes to their oppression. Now and then the guerrillas might shoot someone but the victims were all bad people—cattle rustlers, rapists, sadistic policemen—who should have been punished by the authorities. The peasants were so delighted that they referred to the NPA as the Nice People Around.

This myth may have overlapped with reality in some parts of the Philippines for a brief period in the 1970's. It is difficult to say because there are virtually no independent accounts available of how the NPA operated a decade or more ago. Certainly some radical leftists who are appalled by the NPA's actions today insist that there was a golden era. But even if that were true, the tarnish was already visible. As early as 1970, about one-third of the ranking NPA members belonged to liquidation squads. And the most upwardly mobile of all the NPA guerrillas during this supposed golden period was Rodolfo Salas, who was riding his reputation as a gunslinger to greater power and status inside the CPP.

IV

Contributing to the myth of a benign NPA was the growing awareness among educated Filipinos that many priests and nuns were becoming deeply involved with the Communists. Many Filipinos, who are more than 90-percent Roman Catholic, seem to believe that if nuns and priests support the Communists, then Communism must have many commendable qualities.

But very few Filipinos appreciate how deep the involvement of many members of the Catholic clergy has become. Nowhere else in the world, it seems, have so many priests and nuns been so committed to the Communist cause. As a Philippine leftist puts it: "Liberation theology has gone much farther in the Philippines than in Latin America. In Latin America, it justifies collaboration with the Communists. Here it means joining the Communists."

Although a great deal of publicity has been given to a handful of priests who have become gun-toting NPA guerrillas, these clerics turned killers form just a small and unrepresentative minority of the Communists inside the Church. In the Philippines, hundred of priests and nuns effectively become Communist-party members by joining a highly secretive, possibly unique, organization called Christians for National Liberation (CNL). The CNL's members include some Catholic lay workers and some Protestants, but its core consists of an estimated 1,200 priests and nuns who form secret cells inside the Catholic Church and its many organizations. The CNL constitution mandates a secretive, highly disciplined structure "based on the principle of democratic centralism," the organizational principle of Marxism-Leninism. The policies of the CNL are also explicitly Communist; its constitution requires members to pledge support for "protracted people's war" and the "armed struggle and the underground movement." The key task is "to overthrow the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship."

The first program adopted by the CNL all but announced the Communists' intention to establish Task Force Detainees under the control of the CNL. The wording left no doubt that the aim was not to protect human rights but to aid the NPA. The program declared that "the CNL must develop a massive, sustained, and militant protest movement against militarization. This seeks to block the full escalation of military activity against the guerrilla fronts. . . . We denounce military atrocities." In 1974, about a year after the CNL program was written, Task Force Detainees came into existence. To this day, all of TFD's 13 regional and subregional directors are priests or nuns and most, if not all, are members of the CNL.

For priests and nuns, joining the CNL amounts to a secret rejection of the Roman Catholic Church. Their acceptance of the CNL's unqualified call for revolutionary violence represents a philosophical break with the Church, but they also break with it in an organizational sense by endorsing a constitution that rejects the Church hierarchy from the local bishopric to the Vatican. Besides requiring members to fight for democratic decision-making in the Church, the CNL constitution says another aim of the organization is "to fight for truly self-reliant and self-determining Filipino churches against the interventions of foreign Church bodies and institutions." Presumably that includes the Pope.

What is particularly insidious about the CNL's presence within the Church is its secrecy. Bishop Francisco Claver, a left-wing critic of the Communists, has often said that he objects not so much to the presence of Communists inside the Church as to their dishonesty and deceit. Priests will live in the same residence or work in the same Church organization as other priests for years without telling them they are CNL members. There is no open and honest debate because they never reveal to their fellow priests precisely what they stand for or where their ultimate loyalties lie.

Partly because virtually no Filipinos outside the CNL know anything of substance about the group, its constitution, or its program, it is still widely believed that the presence of priests and nuns in-

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side the Communist movement is a force for moderation and mercy. Such comforting thoughts are promoted by people like the nun who told me that she knew guerrillas who, after being exposed to some of the Communists in the Church, began carrying Bibles in their packs. Yet the evidence suggests that the CNL members are more radical and rigid than other Communists. In statements commenting on the Aquino assassination that were issued within days of each other in the fall of 1983, the CPP endorsed all forms of protest, both violent and nonviolent, against the Marcos regime while the CNL called only for armed struggle.

It is not only the rhetoric of the CNL that is radical. Any curious visitor to provincial *conventos* where priests live and work will soon discover that many of them harbor clerics who are working virtually full time for the revolution. CNL members find shelter for wounded guerrillas, help party cadres move through their towns on the way to NPA base areas, and serve as message drops.

For a period in the middle to late 1970's, in some areas where the NPA's existence was still tenuous, the help of CNL priests and nuns was probably essential in permitting the NPA to hang on. In other areas, the CNL and its allies hastened the growth of the Communists. In Mindanao, for instance, the Communists took virtually complete control of the day-to-day running of the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference, the organization that the bishops of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago had set up to administer social programs. The bishops eventually conceded that the only way they could regain control of their own organization was to abolish it. After much agony and delay, that is exactly what they did.

On the island of Negros, leftist sources confirm personal impressions that some priests were involved in organizing sugar workers for the Communists. Years before, the PKP, the old Communist party, had tried to organize these workers but had been quickly thrown off the isolated haciendas where the sugar workers lived. Said one participant in that old struggle: "We failed completely." But the new CPP succeeded: "When priests come to organize the workers under the banner of religion, better yet when the priests are Australian or Irish, it's easy. The landlords will never think that this is a Communist organization. But that is what happened; the Basic Christian Communities [organized by the priests] in Negros became the infrastructure of the NPA."

One account of how the CPP has infiltrated and seized control of Church organizations in the Philippines is the testimony of the late Father Edgardo Kangleon. Father Kangleon was deeply involved in the Communist-party network operating inside the Roman Catholic Church on the island of Samar. After being arrested, he had a change of heart and consented to have a dialogue with Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile in front of three Catholic bishops.

Kangleon talked freely about how the Communists and a few trusted members of front groups had taken virtually complete control of the Church's social-action programs in Samar. Church programs ostensibly aimed at helping peasants, fishermen, and illiterates were in reality initiated and controlled by the Communist party, said Kangleon. "We geared these programs toward our own motives." Applications for financial help from Philippine and foreign agencies were passed through a regional organization, the Visayan Secretariat for Social Action, where other Communists forwarded them with a favorable recommendation to potential donor organizations.

The same thing is happening today to a greater or lesser extent in every region of the Philippines. It seems that no one in the Marcos regime or even in the CPP has a good estimate of the total amount. But no one doubts that hundreds of thousands, quite possibly millions, of dollars from abroad are flowing into Communist-controlled organizations and projects in the Philippines. One intelligence analyst estimates that Church-related organizations in Western Europe alone last year donated $750,000 to Communist-controlled organizations under the umbrella of the Roman Catholic Church. But that is only a semi-educated guess.

Despite the great inroads that the Communists have made in the Catholic Church since Christians for National Liberation was formed in February 1972, the Church as a whole is still far from being pro-Communist. Less than 10 percent of the country's 14,000 priests and nuns belong to the CNL; most, if asked point blank, would say they are opposed to Communism. But this rank-and-file majority, now deeply disillusioned with the Marcos regime, has failed to come up with any coherent political stance that is both anti-Marcos and anti-Communist.

Thus the majority is easily cowed by the pro-Communist minority; even most conservative bishops now try to ignore pro-Communist activism among their priests, just as they themselves refrain from making anti-Communist statements. In fact, the Church majority has been bullied into such a flaccid neutrality regarding the Communists that it was an unusual, newsworthy event this summer when the Archbishop of Zamboanga, Francisco Cruces, pleaded that publicity given to NPA atrocities be as extensive as publicity given to military atrocities.

There is little immediate prospect that the Church will come to grips with the Communist challenge. Instead, the implicit policy of the Church hierarchy, from the Archbishop of Manila, Jaime Cardinal Sin, to the lowliest provincial

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bishop, is to maintain a state of ignorance about the CPP presence inside the Church. Cardinal Sin, in particular, is known to place the survival of a unified Catholic Church above almost everything else. If he were to launch a comprehensive examination of the CPP presence in the Church, he would, to borrow a Marxist term, be heightening the contradictions within the Church, and possibly precipitating a crisis.

V

BACK in 1976, the Communists did not seem to pose much of a threat to the Church, or to any other institution in the Philippines. On June 25, 1976, after the CPP leadership had spent months analyzing the failure of the party and the NPA to make significant gains, the CPP issued a cautious new position paper. Although it has apparently been circulated only clandestinely and in mimeographed form, *Our Urgent Tasks* remains one of the key documents in the CPP's history. It would also prove to be the last important party paper written by Sison before his arrest.

Although *Tasks* brimmed with Sison's rhetorical optimism ("the soil for the revolutionary antifeudal movement and armed struggle in the countryside is more fertile than ever before"), the overall message was glum. The Marcos regime was killing or arresting NPA guerrillas and CPP cadres at a rapid rate. There had been hardly any net growth in party membership since 1973. The party remained a small organization, perhaps 3,000 members, who were almost all one-time student radicals and other educated Filipinos from the middle and upper classes. In fact, most party members then seem to have been former members of KM, the radical youth organization, or had been recruited by KM members. The party of the masses it definitely was not. As *Tasks* almost plaintively stated: "We must increase the number of party members who are of worker and peasant status. In this regard, we must keep in mind that we do not wish to be an exclusively cadre party."

With false bravado, the *Tasks* paper declared that "in no year [since 1968] has the enemy struck down more than 5 percent of the party." Even taken at face value, this was an admission that as many as two-fifths of the Filipinos who had joined the CPP since 1968 had been killed. But few of these deaths occurred among the large number of party members who had remained in the towns and cities. What Sison was really admitting was that the many party members fighting with the NPA were dying like flies.

One of the key problems then faced by the NPA was its lack of modern rifles. On that score, the party document was more hortatory than helpful: "We make sure that at the core of such weapons as bolos [a machete-like knife], spears, bows and arrows, and homemade explosives are good guns." And if that is not possible, then "a full enemy squad . . . caught by surprise . . . can be easily overpowered by our militia with bolos or even with bare hands."

The bottom-line advice *Our Urgent Tasks* had for the NPA was to avoid military action as much as possible and, instead, return to the task of consolidating control over rural base areas in remote parts of the country. Only after there is "painstaking work" and "solid organizational work," said Sison, should the NPA attempt military action. Cautioned the CPP strategist: "We can advance only step by step."

The NPA proceeded to build those secure base areas with a vengeance. "Solid organizational work" soon came to mean the total mobilization and control of the people in the base areas. This is how the Communist-party publication, *Ang Bayan*, described what was happening to civilians in NPA areas by the late 1970's:

> In the guerrilla fronts, the day-to-day work of the masses includes giving material support to the people's army, keeping the enemy under surveillance, and helping to safeguard the security of the revolutionary forces. The people also participate in military operations carried out by the guerrilla units. They also play an important role in exposing and punishing enemy spies.

Many such "civilians" forced by the NPA into semi-combatant roles were among the first victims when the military came hunting the guerrillas. It was classic guerrilla-warfare strategy: coopt civilians and put them between you and the government's armed forces. Their deaths have continued to provide grist for the mills of groups like Task Force Detainees.

But there was another reason why the NPA had concluded by the mid-1970's that it had to be ruthless in asserting control over the guerrilla base areas. In *Mindanao Party Situation and Policies*, another CPP document issued about the same time as *Our Urgent Tasks*, guerrilla leaders blamed their losses on their failure to kill "bad elements" and "local government informants." What the NPA had to confront was the fact that, unlike virtually all Communist guerrilla movements that had ever achieved victory, it had no completely secure base area or sanctuary. There was no friendly foreign territory just across an international boundary where its guerrillas could flee when the fighting got particularly heavy. Nor did it have a remote base inside the country like Mao's Yenan that government troops could not penetrate. Instead, to this day, there is no NPA base area anywhere in the Philippines that a large contingent of government troops could not penetrate and occupy if it wished to. Since the NPA cannot depend on territory, there is nowhere the enemy cannot come, the NPA has to make certain there is no one who might talk to the enemy when he arrives.

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The literally terrifying solution that the party and the NPA came up with was to demonstrate their willingness to kill anyone who might possibly hinder the consolidation of their base areas. A defender of the NPA might say that, forced by military realities, the NPA terrorized the rural population. The NPA killed real, possible, and even, in its view, potential informers. It killed at the slightest pretext just to demonstrate its power and coldbloodedness. In Bukidnon province, for instance, we have first-hand accounts of the NPA killing a man solely because he once bragged that he had no fear of the NPA and, in another town, killing two men because, the guerrillas announced afterward, they had maintained mistresses. There are also countless second-hand accounts that make it clear that the NPA is less interested in whom it kills than in demonstrating to a cowed populace that it is ready to kill.

The NPA's new ruthlessness was endorsed by the top CPP leadership. The party in effect told the NPA that it should feel free to kill anyone it felt it was necessary to kill. By including on the death list "unreformed bad elements who hinder the development of the revolutionary movement in the *barrio*," the CPP was giving the NPA virtual carte blanche. If that was not subjective enough, *Ang Bayan* (December 31, 1980) seemed to suggest that any killing was permissible if a village mob approved:

> What kind of criminals are meted out the death penalty by the revolutionary movement? The masses clearly express the answer to this by their feeling of relief every time a "*demonyo*" (enemy spy) or some other bad element is given capital punishment by the NPA. . . . The crimes of these bad elements vary but these are all so grave as to warrant death as a just penalty.

In this period of reconsolidation, NPA guerrilla bands gravitated neither to the poorest areas in the Philippines nor to those areas where military abuses were necessarily the greatest. Instead, the NPA sunk new roots into remote and isolated areas where the government and the military had little if any effective presence and authority. The interior of the island of Samar was one of these vacuum areas; Davao del Norte, a province in eastern Mindanao, was another.

It was in Davao del Norte that I learned what the NPA had become. By the late 1970's, the NPA was well on its way to taking effective control of much of the province. The center of NPA strength was the municipality (equivalent in size to a large U.S. county) of San Vicente, still known to its inhabitants by its previous name, Laac. There, in late 1981, the Philippine military finally reacted to the NPA's gains by setting up variations of strategic hamlets. They forced farm families in small settlements to dismantle their houses and rebuild them in the municipality's larger towns where small military units were posted to stand guard. The military's aim was to isolate the NPA guerrillas from their support base. The move, which appeared to be a pilot project, alarmed the Communist party; clandestine CPP publications had long warned that hamletization represented a dire threat to the NPA.

So the Communists decided to launch a concerted propaganda campaign aimed at portraying the hamlets as a rank injustice foisted on an unwilling population. The first two journalists invited, indirectly by the Communists, to visit San Vicente, where they could be expected to write unfavorably on the hamlets, were a good-hearted missionary-journalist, who had great sympathy for the far Left, and myself.

By then I had reported several stories from the Philippines that reflected harshly on the Marcos regime, several of which had been attacked by the pro-Marcos press in Manila. The best-known article, provocatively headlined by *Time* "Pacific Powderkeg" (September 24, 1979), may have been the first comprehensive portrait in a major U.S. media outlet of the decay that was besetting the Marcos regime and the country at large. Reports of this kind had given me substantial access to Communists and their fellow-travelers. They seemed to think that I was their sort of reporter.

Not, as it turned out, in Davao del Norte. This was so despite reporting conditions heavily skewed in favor of the guerrillas. A pro-NPA group accompanied me virtually everywhere. The interpreter for all my interviews with local farmers was very close to, probably a member of, the Communist party. (An unqualified statement of CPP membership is hard to come by; membership status is so secret that fellow members are forbidden to acknowledge membership to one another unless they have been directed to work together.) But one advantage I did have was that many of the peasants I talked to addressed me as "father," believing I was a Catholic missionary in whom they could, presumably, confide. The peasants were not parroting anybody's line: they were obviously relieved that the guerrillas had fled, but they seemed wary of the military who were the new powers-that-be. All conversations were held well out of sight of military personnel.

Everywhere we went, the story was the same. The area was relatively well off; most farmers worked their own small landholdings. Until a few months before, there had been no significant military abuses; in fact, the area had generally been ignored by the authorities. There was no real government presence except in the *poblacion* (central town) of San Vicente. Roads were no better than dirt tracks, increasing the isolation of the area. The NPA had moved in just a few years before and had already killed scores of people. In the *sitio* of Linumbaan, a small village of 83 families,

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an NPA supporter and resident told us, the NPA had killed 20 people in the village and immediate surrounding area. The killings he described were aimed at demonstrating the NPA's power more than anything else. The NPA, he said, had killed people who had spoken out against the guerrillas. It had killed a woman, whom the villagers referred to simply as Tomboy, solely because she was a reputed lesbian. At another *sitio* that was home to 72 families, the NPA had killed two local people in the past two years. Villagers said the NPA had steadily raised "revolutionary taxes" that were paid in cash and food.

The NPA had set up forced-labor plots in some locations; local farmers had no choice but to work a three-day stint on them every few weeks. Nearly all the produce from the plots was appropriated by the guerrillas; a small amount was apparently put in collective storage for the entire village.

In three separate interviews, local farmers summed up the NPA's methods by slicing their hands across their throats, graphically conveying their firm belief that they would have been killed if they had not complied with the NPA's demands.

VI

WHILE the NPA was resorting to increasingly brutal methods in the latter half of the 1970's, an almost complete turnover was not so coincidentally under way in the Communist-party leadership. Starting in the mid-1970's, members of the KM generation of leaders began to be killed or captured. Names well known in Philippine radical circles—Ocampo, Corpuz, Jopson—fell one by one. And on November 10, 1977, the party chairman himself, Jose Maria Sison, was captured. Sison's comrade and top military man, Bernabe Buscayno, had been captured more than a year earlier.

During this period, a gloating President Marcos publicly declared that the elimination of the top party leaders had broken the Communist movement. Even today, Marcos is fond of rolling out statistics on how many CPP and NPA leaders have been killed or jailed. He apparently still does not understand that the ability of the CPP and the NPA to survive these repeated setbacks and then to continue growing under a new corps of leaders is compelling evidence of the Communists' strength, discipline, and resilience.

At a central committee meeting in January 1977, ten months before Sison was captured, Salas had reportedly already been designated as Sison's successor. In any event, he was quickly and formally elected party head in early 1978, capping a meteoric rise in the ranks of the CPP.

Born in the province of Pampanga on December 23, 1947, he went to high school in Angeles City, the prosperous next-door neighbor of Clark air-force base. He arrived on the campus of the University of the Philippines (UP) in 1965 where he studied mathematics and then chemical engineering. Soon caught up in radical student politics, Salas is said to have been recruited into the Communist orbit by Sison himself. Technically this made Salas a member of UP's KM generation of radicals. But Salas's contemporaries on the UP campus in the 1960's now say that he was an unassuming fellow who was never part of the inner circle of student leftists. By most accounts it was only after leaving the university and going underground that Salas became important in the party.

Even today, as the undisputed leader of the Communist insurgency, Salas does not leave a vivid impression with Filipinos outside the CPP who occasionally meet with him surreptitiously. They describe him as a man of ordinary appearance ("except for his ears, which stick out and make him look like Alfred E. Neuman," said one opposition politician). He speaks quietly and exudes self-confidence.

With no claims to being an intellectual like Sison, Salas developed a reputation as a good underground organizer and a daring military tactician. He was conducting military actions like the Subic Bay ambush at a time when the NPA nationwide had only a few modern guns. Although he was arrested in June 1973, he soon escaped. Salas was given the powerful post of party chairman for Central Luzon and was reportedly already in charge of party-building nationwide when he became the leader of the entire CPP.

Once he was chairman, Salas immediately began putting his stamp on the party. Sison, the poet, Maoist intellectual, and grand strategist, had placed great emphasis on ideological correctness and procedural purity. But Salas, the engineer and military tactician, though no less radical than Sison in his ultimate political goals, seems from the beginning to have been much more concerned with ends than with means. Whatever was required to win the struggle for power was justified. It was Salas, for instance, who wrote or at least authorized those party statements, issued since the late 1970's, which establish and defend the party's carte-blanche policy toward the killing of civilians in NPA guerrilla base areas.

The first whiff of the new opportunism came in 1978 when a CPP directive authorized local party leaders to jettison strict procedures set up during Sison's leadership for the careful screening and training of prospective party members before they were admitted to the CPP. For the sake of party-building, the new directive stated, instant memberships could now be granted in areas where the party was just starting to organize.

In the late summer of 1980, members of the Communist party's central committee gathered at a temporary hideout in the foothills near the Bicol town of Daet. It was a typical central-committee plenum, with intense discussion lasting for

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weeks. The meeting ended with agreement on a growth plan that reflected Salas's ambition to speed up the revolution. Party membership, then totaling 8,000, was to be tripled and NPA strength, then just a few thousand, was to be doubled over the next three years. The party's plans for Mindanao were particularly ambitious. The number of guerrilla fronts on the island was to be increased to 14 by 1984, even though there were only five in existence at the end of 1980.

For the party, the timing of the decision to launch a major expansion effort could not have been better. The Philippine economy had begun to unravel in 1979 due in part to the second oil crisis that hit Third World oil importers like the Philippines particularly hard. Unlike the aftermath of the 1973 crisis, the Philippines could not borrow or export its way out of its problem. There was no new flood of credits for economies as badly managed as the Philippines and there was no new surge in commodity prices. In fact, the prices of sugar and coconut oil, two key exports for the Philippines, were in the basement.

But the lion's share of the credit for the economic collapse was due to the corrupt and wasteful economic policies of the Marcos regime that were finally coming home to roost. Businesses run by Marcos cronies and propped up by billions of dollars in government loans went bankrupt, some because of incompetence, others because the cronies had looted their own companies. Institutions that might have helped the Philippines weather the storm had been crippled by Marcos. The legislature had been abolished, the judiciary deeply compromised, the military politicized, the independent business sector cronyized.

With no jobs luring Filipinos from the countryside to the cities and newly unemployed Filipinos returning to the villages where there was a better chance of eating regularly, the agricultural labor force suddenly began to balloon. There was an increase of at least three million, or 34 percent, from 1979 to 1984, according to government statistics. Suddenly, the NPA was awash in potential recruits, but they were a new breed. For years, the core of the NPA had been young educated Communists from the cities who completely dominated the local recruits, best described as members of the rural lumpenproletariat. The newcomers flooding into the NPA were acting primarily out of economic necessity, not ideological commitment, but they were able to feel right at home. Under Salas the CPP and the NPA had been paying less attention to ideology, and more to achieving victory; to collecting more money and guns to make that victory possible; and to cutting down anyone who might stand in the way.

INEVITABLY, the new circumstances created a new kind of guerrilla leader. No one personifies this change better than Romulo (Rolly) Kintanar, who today is the single most powerful guerrilla leader in the Philippines. The party dispatched Rolly Kintanar to Mindanao in late 1974 or early 1975, about the time the NPA on the island had been reduced to a pitiful handful of seven men with seven guns. Kintanar was initially charged with giving military training to new and existing NPA guerrillas. But he quickly emerged as the key military tactician and commander in the NPA, building up NPA forces in Mindanao from a total of seven gun-carriers in 1975 to about 100 by the end of 1976.

It was Kintanar, according to some reports, who perfected the NPA's solution to its critical shortage of guns: he created and trained small hit squads, which assassinated policemen and military personnel, often on crowded streets, and stole their guns.

When the economic crisis hit the Philippines, it hit commodity-dependent Mindanao the hardest. And no guerrilla leader was more ready than Kintanar to exploit the new circumstances, and transform the insurrection from an ideological to an economic one. Today, Mindanao is home to several thousand NPA guerrillas and, thanks more to Kintanar than to anyone else, the island has become the nemesis of the Armed Forces of the Philippines just as Sison envisioned.

Kintanar's success did not immediately endear him to the national party leadership. He was repeatedly passed over for top party positions in Mindanao and was not even admitted to the central committee until 1979, when Salas was firmly in control. There is no mystery about why the old generation of party leaders in particular were not eager to embrace their military genius in the south. The most positive comment heard about Kintanar in leftist circles is that "he's a first-rate military commander who doesn't know anything about political ideology." Others are not so charitable, describing him as "a warlord who's operating a massive protection racket" and "a psychotic . . . who loves to put a bandanna around his forehead and then go out and kill people."

The number of would-be guerrillas needing to be equipped and fed has continued growing faster in Mindanao than in other parts of the Philippines. This created an economic crisis for the NPA because it was already coming close to exhausting its traditional "tax base." For years, the NPA's rural guerrillas had been demanding what amounted to protection money from the operators of mines, logging camps, plantations, and ranches. Those refusing to pay had either to hire their own private armies to keep the NPA at bay or to wait for the guerrillas' tax-enforcement bureau to show up and drive ore-carrier trucks off cliffs, burn logging equipment, or rustle cattle.

Most businessmen paid, reluctantly but without any great sense of outrage. After all, in Mindanao, payoffs to political leaders, military officers, and sometimes criminal bosses had long been consid-

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ered part of the cost of doing business. But as NPA "taxes" rose, some of the taxpayers said they were being driven out of business. A few of the more reasonable NPA leaders actually sent accountants who were CPP members to examine the books of some of the businessmen who were pleading poverty and waived taxes if it was shown they were losing money.

Kintanar's solution was to start collecting taxes in Davao, the sprawling city of an estimated million people on Mindanao's east coast. Businessmen who did not comply might be kidnapped; storeowners risked having their stores bombed or vandalized in the night. Kintanar dispatched NPA gunmen into Davao to enforce tax collection and to collect a commodity even more precious to the NPA than money—guns to arm the countless would-be guerrillas in the area. Over the past few years, dozens of policemen have been shot and killed in the streets of Davao by NPA hit men who grab their guns and race away.

To kill policemen and enforce his protection rackets, Kintanar has drawn around him a bunch of thugs who are a world apart from the campus Maoists who launched the revolution seventeen years ago. In their hideouts, the walls sport posters not of Mao but of Charles Bronson, for them a symbol of macho violence. Says a Davao City resident with leftist sympathies: "These people aren't good Communists." But the national Communist-party leadership no longer seems to care. Kintanar's boys are doing their job: Davao continues to slip slowly out of the Marcos regime's control and business is grinding to a halt.

All the available evidence suggests that Kintanar launched urban guerrilla warfare in Davao City despite the deep misgivings, if not the outright opposition, of the CPP's national leadership. Underground party publications long ignored what was happening in the city. Then they began running the occasional article endorsing urban guerrilla warfare in principle but stressing that the time was not yet ripe.

Some Filipinos on the Left argue that Kintanar at that time was ignoring CPP directives and was on the verge of becoming an independent warlord or bandit leader. But recently the national party leadership seems to have decided that, thug or no thug, Kintanar is one of them. Kintanar has been promoted; he was recently named head of the NPA's central military staff and of its national operational command. CPP publications are now endorsing urban guerrilla warfare in general terms and are reporting favorably on what they have dubbed the NPA's Armed City Partisans (ACP's). The ACP's are essentially hit men and saboteurs. Previously, the euphemism used by the NPA for its assassins in both city and countryside was "sparrow units." In the good old days, they were simply members of "liquidation squads."

At the same time, party leaders may be trying to cut Kintanar off from his power base. While the new job titles sound impressive, it is uncertain how much real power they carry with them. The jobs could keep him in metropolitan Manila, or the provinces just north of the capital, where the underground headquarters of the CPP and the NPA are believed to be located. Either place is far from his base in southern Mindanao. The party also seems to be trying to reduce the independence of Kintanar and any other would-be guerrilla warlords by ordering that large Manila-based companies with logging, mining, or other business operations in the provinces pay their "revolutionary taxes" to representatives of the party in Manila and not to local NPA leaders.

These efforts by the national party leadership to maintain strong central control are consistent with the entire history of the CPP. Although the party encourages local CPP and NPA leaders to use their initiative in formulating tactics and carrying out operations, it has always acted like a classic Communist party in demanding total adherence of its members to the party hierarchy and to official party policy.

This insistence on unity and discipline helps explain the marathon meetings where top party leaders will often spend weeks thrashing out policy and personal differences before reaching an iron-clad consensus which, from that point on, is considered unbreachable. It also explains why the CPP commits substantial resources to maintaining an extensive courier network so that party communications can flow quickly from one end of the archipelago to the other. In addition, the party leadership is constantly reassigning party cadres to various parts of the country to counter the regionalist tendencies that are historically so strong in the Philippines.

Because the CPP is secretive to the point of paranoia about its internal affairs, and because it almost never gives its leaders any public exposure, many otherwise well-informed Filipinos strongly doubt that a cohesive national Communist party even exists. This was the consensus, for instance, of a group of Philippine legislators, representing both the government and opposition parties, who recently visited Washington. Their collective view was that the NPA guerrillas in various parts of the country are effectively autonomous groups that have, at best, tenuous ties with each other.

Only a few Filipinos are better informed. Another recent visitor to Washington, Jaime Ongpin, the chief executive of the Philippines' leading mining company, Benguet, has no doubt about the centralized nature of the party. He said that guerrillas harassing his company's operations in Mindanao knew precisely how Benguet had handled similar harassment at another company operation in northern Luzon, several hundred miles away.

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VII

THE Philippine Communists are not waging revolution only through the outlawed New People's Army. They are also stepping up their efforts to topple the Marcos regime by using an ever-changing network of tightly controlled but legal front groups. And as Communist power grows both underground and aboveground in the Philippines, the front groups are making less and less of a secret of their Communist affiliation. This past spring, a coalition of CPP fronts called a general strike aimed at shutting down the Mindanao economy and creating political havoc. A pamphlet issued by the coalition calling for such actions as "the putting up of barricades" on Davao's main streets left no doubt that the strike organizers were calling for an urban insurrection:

> The primary objective of the *Welgang Bayan* [national strike] is to paralyze the economic, political, and social machinery of the dictatorship. . . . The *Welgang Bayan* will develop from partial to sustained strikes, from temporary to complete paralysis. . . . This will result in the paralysis of the economy and political foundation of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship and facilitate its downfall.

Shortly after the strike, the key publicly identifiable organizers were arrested. One of those was Davao lawyer Laurente Iligan. His incarceration has become a minor *cause célèbre* among human-rights activists. However, news reports, including one in the New York *Times*, have failed to indicate the declared goals of the strike.

The granddaddy of all the CPP fronts is the National Democratic Front (NDF). In the *Program of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines*, the NDF grandly describes itself as a broad coalition "made up of Filipino nationalists, democrats, progressive christians [the NDF uses the lower-case c] and church people, national minority autonomists, women's emancipationists, socialists, communists, and other genuine patriots here and abroad, representing a wide variety of political and ideological trends." And within this coalition, promises *Liberation*, the NDF's own publication, "no single party . . . will be allowed to dominate. . . ."

This is all fiction. The NDF has been the total creature of the CPP since 1971 when a central-committee directive ordered its creation. It was formally founded on April 24, 1973, but only after CPP members had established the Christians for National Liberation and other front groups that, in turn, were designated as the founding members of the NDF "coalition." Other founding groups in this ostensibly broad alliance were the NPA and the CPP itself, as well as CPP captive organizations like KM, the Communist youth group founded by Sison.

Not only is the NDF completely controlled by the Communists; so, apparently, are all its constituent organizations. Some, like the CNL, are effectively part of the CPP. There are other constituent organizations of students and workers—a good example being the KMU labor alliance—in which the majority of members are not Communists but the leaders are.

The NDF is organized into secret cells, similar to those of the Communist party. Apparently most of the NDF's membership is composed of CPP candidate members and of CNL members who do not want to take that final step of formally joining the party. The CPP administers the NDF through its National United Front Commission. The key roles in the NDF are filled by senior party members. Recently, the NDF's leading clandestine spokesman has been Tony Zumel, who not coincidentally is the CPP's propaganda chief.

A few years ago, the CPP faced the fact that the NDF had failed to develop into a classic Communist front, that is, a political umbrella organization with a program broad enough so that a respectable cross-section of non-Communist leftists and nationalists would be willing to endorse it. So recently the party set up a new generation of legal fronts—a good example being the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom, and Democracy—meant to draw in non-Communists. But the CPP's control of such organizations has been so obvious and heavy-handed that they have failed to develop broad bases. The Communists also infiltrated groups they had not started—like the August Twenty-One Movement, or ATOM, founded by Butz Aquino. But here again, any hope that the Communists might have had to influence a popular, grass-roots organization was destroyed by their seemingly compulsive need for total control. This summer ATOM split in half, with the Communists going one way and Aquino's people another.

For a while this spring, the Communists appeared to some anti-Marcos activists to be genuinely willing to participate in the creation of BAYAN, a broad opposition alliance in which they would not have automatic control. In the original Communist proposal, BAYAN would have three equal voting blocs: "national democrats," i.e., the pro-Communist group; social democrats; and "liberal democrats," i.e., moderates.

But once preliminary meetings got under way, recalls Butz Aquino, the Communists repeatedly and successfully demanded that the voting formula be changed in their favor. When the founding congress began on Saturday, May 5, it soon became obvious to Aquino that the Communists were determined to manipulate and control the entire event. The Communists orchestrated workshop discussions, broke standing agreements by slipping the names of trusted party members into the nomination lists for the executive, and referred every major decision to top Communists

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not even at the meeting. Recounts Butz Aquino:

> The people outside the hall who we didn't even see were calling the shots. . . . Party members were giving the orders. Whenever there was a crucial decision to be made, they'd ask for a recess. Then they'd come back with their hard position.

Angered by the CPP's manipulative approach, virtually every respected and independent political figure in the anti-Marcos opposition—from moderates like Aquino to left-wing nationalists like former Senator Jose Diokno—have quit BAYAN. After working on and off with the Communists for the two years since his brother was assassinated, Aquino concludes: "You can't trust these guys." But how could it be otherwise when the CPP's explicit policy toward all front-group activity is one of deceit? This is how the basic party directive on front groups described the need for secret party control:

> These concentric circles [anti-Marcos elements, NDF members, party members] are expressive of our efforts to have the party . . . committee always at the center of anti-fascist and other legal activities, leading those activities without being clearly visible to the enemy.

To many it seems that those hurt most by the Communist machinations inside BAYAN were the Communists themselves. Today, BAYAN is known as just another CPP front. If the Communists had restrained themselves, they would today be a strong, perhaps decisive, influence within a popular, broadly based, anti-Marcos alliance. The explanations being advanced for this seemingly self-defeating behavior are all rather ominous. Aquino offers two reasons suggesting that we are merely witnessing a totalitarian party in action. The first is a paraphrase of the CPP directive: "their wanting to dominate completely any organization they join . . ." The other, "their feeling that they're the only ones who have the answers to everything." Jose Diokno suspects the explanation lies in the Communists' growing belief that they are so close to taking power that they no longer need to make significant compromises with the non-Communist opposition.

CERTAINLY there were few real compromises evident in the new National Democratic Front program that was issued at the beginning of this year. Although Communists have repeatedly described the program as a moderate appeal to non-Communists, in reality it is overtly Marxist and covertly Leninist. The heart of the program is a call for the establishment of a People's Democratic Republic of the Philippines (PDRP). The program is like that of most other nations with names that start out "People's Democratic Republic of. . . ." The United States is, of courses, the enemy. The program promises that the PDRP's "revolutionary army as well as the people shall be constantly in a state of readiness to repel any act of intervention and aggression from foreign forces, including the United States." Furthermore, "the United States must leave its military bases in the Philippines. . . ." And "as a rule, direct investments and profit-making assets of the U.S. and other big foreign capitalists, especially those in the vital and strategic industries, shall be nationalized."

In addition to Americans, a lot of Filipinos might feel unwelcome in the new People's Democratic Republic of the Philippines:

> Upon victory, a people's tribunal shall be created. This tribunal will have jurisdiction to try and punish enemies of the revolution and their collaborators who have committed crimes against the people, and to escheat [*sic*] properties and ill-gotten wealth amassed by the ruling elite of the old order.

The program also promises "severe punishment of those with grave crimes (i.e., those who owe the people blood debts) and reeducation of those who deserve leniency. . . ."

The NDF program repeatedly states that the PDRP will be run by a "democratic coalition" government. What is most unsettling about that statement is the NDF's assurance that the coalition will be as pluralistic as the NDF is today. "As in the course of the people's war, no political party, group, or individual shall be allowed to monopolize the decision-making processes and the execution of state affairs." If there is any remaining doubt about the CPP's concept of a coalition, it should have been dashed by NDF spokesman Tony Zumel who said earlier this year that the NDF rejected the suggestion that the Communists in the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam had overwhelmed the front's non-Communist reformers.

While the "democratic-coalition" government the Communists are promising through the NDF cannot be described as a coalition, neither should it be described as democratic. The NDF program declares that "all the basic democratic rights shall be embodied in the constitution of the People's Democratic Republic. These shall include the right . . . to free speech and the free press. . . ." But the CPP's underground monthly, *Ang Bayan*, confided to party members this year that, contrary to what its front organization is promising, freedom of the press will be tightly restricted:

> Under the People's Democratic Republic, press freedom shall be enjoyed by the toiling classes and the strata of the bourgeoisie allied to them —in short by the overwhelming majority of the people who are at present exploited and oppressed. But should we allow the same freedom to be enjoyed by those who would seek the restoration of imperialist, landlord, comprador, and fascist rule? Democracy will be enjoyed by

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the majority composed of the nationalist and democratic classes, while their class adversaries shall be suppressed—that is, prevented from regaining power.

This sort of duplicity could not possibly be surprising to any student of Communist history, but there are few such people in the Philippines. There is a whole generation of young, vaguely leftish Filipinos who view the NDF program as a completely credible document deserving of serious discussion.

THE Communists' intention of crushing a free press while their totally controlled front group, the NDF, promises otherwise is simple and straightforward duplicity. But the CPP's leadership is also quite adept at complex, multi-layered duplicity. Nowhere is this more evident than in how the party leaders are handling the emotional and controversial issue of the U.S. military bases on Philippine soil.

At first glance, the Communist position seems unambiguous. The NDF program declares that "the United States must leave its military bases in the Philippines. . . ." In fact, says the NDF, "no foreign power shall be allowed to set up military bases on Philippine soil. . . ." For years, the CPP has ridden this issue, using it to mobilize students and other nationalists to demonstrate in front of the U.S. embassy in Manila. Yet simultaneously, CPP leaders have been repeatedly signaling U.S. officials that they are willing to make a deal with the United States whereby the U.S. bases could continue operating after the Communists came to power.

The CPP began sending such a signal as early as 1981 when Horacio (Boy) Morales told a journalist that, despite the NDF's clear-cut pledge to remove the bases, all the NDF really wanted was to negotiate their future status. This year, people who have spoken with Salas and other figures in the Communist movement say that they also have expressed their readiness to junk the NDF program and make a deal on the bases.

But this is not necessarily the final word on where the Communists really stand on the issue. This is because Philippine nationalists who are strongly opposed to the bases say that Salas has been reassuring them this year that his offers to make a deal are a tactical ruse aimed at nothing more than lulling the United States.

This is consistent with the NPA's apparent decision a few years ago to avoid military action aimed at the bases or at U.S. military personnel. Long gone are the days when Salas was a hit-squad leader ambushing U.S. Navy personnel at Subic. Today the areas immediately adjacent to Clark and Subic are among the most peaceful in the Philippines. Instead of attacking U.S. military officers and heightening Washington's alarm over the deteriorating situation in the Philippines, the NPA is quietly collecting "revolutionary taxes" from the businesses that prosper at the periphery of the bases.

VIII

THE logical question to ask about the issue of U.S. military bases, or any other major issue, should be: what is the official position of the Communist Party of the Philippines? In fact, what is the official program of the Communist Party of the Philippines? Every Communist party on earth, after all, has an official program. But ask any rank-and-file member of the CPP what his party's program is and watch the uncertainty flicker over his face. When he recovers, he always has an answer. The trouble is that every CPP member seems to have a different answer.

Answer One: "The CPP's program is that of the founding document, *Programme for a People's Democratic Revolution*, issued in 1968." Obviously not, say other party members. And with good reason: the 1968 program, with its praise of Mao and Albania and its attacks on institutions that no longer exist, has long been out of date.

Answer Two: "*Our Urgent Tasks* [1976] was an update of the party program." This answer was offered only by Jose Maria Sison, in a written response to questions I relayed to him this summer. The document he refers to was the last party document he wrote before being jailed.

Answer Three: "The party has no program." This answer, volunteered by more than one party member, is not credible. It is true only in the very narrow, technical sense that the CPP has apparently not held a full-dress party congress, at which party programs and the like are formally ratified, since the founding meeting in 1968. But this does not prevent the top CPP leadership from having its own program that it keeps secret from party members.

Answer Four: "The CPP program is the same as the program of the National Democratic Front." That sounds like a confession of what we know is true—that the Communists completely control the NDF. But the fact that the CPP controls the NDF does not mean that the public NDF program is the same as the secret CPP program.

With its promises of reeducation camps, sweeping nationalization of private business, and an anti-American stance in foreign policy, the NDF program by most yardsticks earns a Communist label. But the NDF's parent, the CPP, is telling its members that the NDF program represents only the beginning of the revolution in the Philippines. Says the CPP's *Ang Bayan*:

> In essence, the [current] people's democratic revolution is a bourgeois democratic revolution and not a proletarian revolution. . . . What will be

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the direction of the democratic coalition government, of the people's democracy that will be established? Depending on the class composition of the revolutionary coalition, it could lead toward socialism or toward capitalism.

In other words, when the NPA is marching down the streets of Manila, the real struggle has just begun: "The party of the revolutionary Filipino proletariat [i.e., we of the CPP] will bend every effort to advance Philippine society toward the correct path of socialism. . . ." Said a member of the central committee in an interview this summer: "That [the NDF program] is the minimum program. The maximum program is Communism."

So what are the constituent parts of the CPP program? In informal conversations this past summer, CPP members talked loosely about a second, radical stage of the revolution that would push the Philippines to the far Left of the Communist world. Evoking memories of the Khmer Rouge's forced evacuation of Phnom Penh, one CPP member said that "most probably" the population of Manila would have to be significantly reduced. "We can't support Manila the way it is."

Another said that the NDF promise "to distribute land to the landless tillers" represents only a halfway house on the road to the total communization of agriculture. "There will be a transition period of land reform and cooperatives. . . . We will invite them [the peasants] to join cooperatives and try to show them the benefits of collective labor. Collectivization will be implemented step by step." And how long will all this take? "A few years," said one. "Easily ten to twenty years," said another.

In truth, none of these relatively low-level party members really knows what the CPP program is. They were simply repeating the kind of talk they had been hearing inside party circles. Like the low-ranking Khmer Rouge soldiers who entered Phnom Penh not knowing that the next day they would be ordering the populace to evacuate, these good soldiers of the CPP are ready to carry out the second stage of the revolution when their leaders unveil the plan. Among the thousands of members of the Communist Party of the Philippines, it seems that only the estimated half-dozen members of the Politburo's executive committee share knowledge of the secret program.

IX

The party leadership's ultra-elitist style was evident as early as 1981 when Rodolfo Salas and a small group around him secretly decided to seek aid from the Soviet bloc. The decision was a momentous one. Since Sison had founded the CPP as a classic Maoist party, all the basic documents of the CPP and the NDF had denounced the foreign policy of the Soviet Union as social-imperialist. This was still the party's position when Salas approved a scheme to smuggle arms from Eastern Europe into the Philippines through South Yemen, which is firmly within the Soviet bloc and has Soviet and East German military personnel based on its soil.

For the record, the arms were donated to the Philippine Communists not by the Soviets but by a branch of the Palestine Liberation Organization. But this was a veneer that even Horacio Morales, a key figure in the smuggling operation, had difficulty in treating seriously. In a one-on-one courthouse interview after he had been arrested, I asked Morales why the CPP had decided to accept aid from the Soviets. "It's a few steps removed from the Soviets," he said with a nervous laugh, adding, "but it's still considered separate, no?"

Long after the arms (AK-47's and Makharov pistols) were aboard a freighter and on their way to the Philippines, the CPP leadership continued to suggest to rank-and-file members that there had been no change in the party's antagonism toward the Soviet Union. The August 1981 issue of *Ang Bayan*, for instance, denounced "Soviet social-imperialism." When the smuggling operation was later exposed and a few angry party members accused Salas and others of secretly acting contrary to party policy, the leadership lamely replied that the arms smuggling was the work of the CPP's National Democratic Front and not of the CPP itself. The fact that the NDF did not drop the anti-Soviet planks from its program until the year after the arms arrived was never explained. Nor was the fact that it was party leader Salas who gave final approval to the Soviet arms shipment.

The CPP leadership did not go public with its swing to a pro-Soviet position until January 1982, when it authorized the NDF to issue a new draft program that dropped all the Maoist jargon and the attacks on the Soviets. The party's Maoist founder, Jose Maria Sison, who had been watching developments in the CPP under Salas with increasing unhappiness since being captured in 1977, was enraged. In an exchange with me of questions and answers from prison in mid-1982, he contemptuously referred to the new NDF program as "this supposed draft." He also suggested that anyone in the CPP or the NDF who had approached the Soviet Union for aid was a renegade: "I do not believe that the National Democratic Front as a whole has ever approached the Soviet Union for assistance. Nobody wants a bear hug. It can be fatal." He added that "China's diplomatic line is correct."

During this period Sison several times signaled his opposition to the changes under way in the CPP. But it soon became obvious that the founding father was being ignored. By mid-1983, the CPP had turned the corner and was openly lean-

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ing toward the Soviets while almost completely ignoring the People's Republic of China. *Ang Bayan* began praising developments in Cambodia, Vietnam, Mozambique, and Angola and dropped its earlier attacks on Soviet and Cuban aggression. Except for the occasional reference to "antagonistic contradictions" between Vietnam and Cambodia, the CPP's statements on foreign affairs are completely consistent with Soviet policy. And this summer, in the exchange of questions and answers, Sison himself seemed to have accepted in principle the idea of the CPP's receiving Soviet aid.

MEANWHILE, using the National Democratic Front as its vehicle, the CPP is actively courting the Soviets in Europe. Luis Jalandoni, a Filipino and former priest who serves as the NDF's international representative in Amsterdam, is successfully tying the NDF, and by implication the CPP, ever closer to the Soviet bloc. Jalandoni was a delegate to last year's International Conference on Nicaragua and for Peace in Central America held in Lisbon. There he conferred with Vietnam's education minister. Jalandoni also worked hard at identifying the NDF and its European supporters with the movement opposed to the deployment of U.S. missiles in Western Europe.

Jalandoni's most important task has evidently been raising funds for the Communist movement back home in the Philippines. He seems to have been very successful. As far back as the summer of 1981, according to unchallenged affidavits, Jalandoni provided $30,000 for travel and transportation to the CPP arms smugglers who passed through Europe on their way to South Yemen. Today, the amount of money flowing into the Philippines from Western Europe each year is estimated by Philippine and U.S. analysts to be at least in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. As already noted, the lion's share of this money seems to be flowing from Church-related bodies in Europe to Communist-dominated organizations within the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines. At least some members of the European Church organizations know precisely what is happening to their money. *Ang Bayan* reported some time ago that "a number of foreign Church people . . . have also visited the NPA guerrilla zones."

Another, increasingly important, source of funds are the so-called Philippine "solidarity groups" that Jalandoni has been instrumental in setting up in Europe. Such groups exist in Sweden, Norway, West Germany, Belgium, Holland, Ireland, and apparently several other countries. Some of these groups appear to be the offspring of small, radical splinter parties. Recently, several of them sent envoys to the Philippines to see first-hand how their donations are being spent by the NPA. A U.S. journalist who spent several days this summer at an NPA camp said a Norwegian woman was in the camp for discussions with the NPA guerrilla leader about giving financial help that would enable the NPA to obtain additional arms. Several German and Japanese radicals have also spent time with the NPA.

The financial help that the CPP is receiving from abroad does not seem to have increased to the point that it is making a huge difference. But it is already substantial, a fact that is almost universally ignored by the U.S. media. In August alone, the Washington *Post* reported that the NPA is receiving "negligible foreign support" while the Washington *Times* flatly stated that "there is no evidence of any material foreign support."

In fact, the CPP has been openly acknowledging since 1974 that it is actively seeking and often receiving material aid from abroad. As recently as this spring, Tony Zumel declared in an NDF news release that

> we have made an appeal to all freedom-loving peoples around the world for political and material assistance and the response has been heartening. Such assistance comes from revolutionary, progressive, and democratic organizations, institutions and individuals who care deeply for our people's liberation struggles and welfare.

The question left hanging is whether the Soviets are involved in the flow of foreign assistance to the Philippine Communists. Since the 1981 arms shipment, which embarrassed both the Soviets and the CPP leadership when it became public, not a single well-documented case of Soviet aid has surfaced. Rumors abound that Vietnam is helping the NPA, but no hard evidence seems to exist. A strong circumstantial case is made by some that at least a few of the radical and Church organizations funneling money from Europe to the Philippine Communists must be controlled or bankrolled by Soviet agents.

But the most persuasive case that the Soviets have begun aiding the Philippine Communists was made by two Filipinos in separate interviews this summer in Manila. Both are very knowledgeable about what is going on inside the Communist party. One is hostile to the CPP; one is very sympathetic. Both said that Moscow is split over how to handle the CPP.

On one side, according to both these sources, is the International Department (of the Central Committee) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). This organization usually takes the leading role in the USSR's relations with foreign Communist parties. But afflicted with bureaucratic inertia, the International Department today is run by conservatives who are comfortable with their decades-long ties to the old, pro-Moscow Communist party in the Philippines, the PKP (which since the expulsion of Sison and his supporters in 1967 has been declining in size

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and influence in comparison with the CPP and whose existence today largely depends on Moscow's recognition of it as a fraternal Communist party). According to this analysis, the International Department bureaucrats have resisted the CPP's repeated requests that they withdraw their recognition of the PKP and recognize the CPP instead.

Though a reading of CPP and PKP statements suggests that the International Department has been trying to convince the PKP to negotiate a modus viviendi with the CPP, hopes for any such agreement seem to have collapsed. By early this year, the CPP had escalated its attacks on the PKP's leaders, calling them "professional political swindlers [who] are trying to sneak into the ranks of the revolutionary Left." The CPSU's International Department responded in June by inviting the PKP's general secretary, Felicisimo Macapagal, to Moscow where the CPSU and the PKP, according to Tass, pledged their "fraternal solidarity."

But the more pragmatic and energetic KGB shares neither the old loyalties nor the new qualms of the International Department, according to my informants. Recently, they say, the KGB has developed close relations with the CPP. The two sides are in frequent contact with each other both in the Philippines and abroad, but precisely what kind of business they are transacting is unknown. Both sources assume that the KGB is assisting the CPP but they have no proof.

Clearly the CPP's new generation of coldly opportunistic leaders would no longer hesitate to accept substantial aid from the Soviets if it were offered. And just as clearly the CPP currently needs a generous foreign backer. For in the last year, the Communists' successes have brought them to a critical juncture where the issue of outside aid is more and more pressing. The guerrillas of the New People's Army are increasing rapidly in number. Moving in ever larger units, they have a soaring demand for arms, food, and equipment. The NPA also has enough potential recruits to double in size if it had the money to equip and support them as well. But the economic depression that helps produce so many potential recruits also makes NPA "tax collecting" increasingly less lucrative, no matter how much extortionate violence is applied.

If the future brings no substantial flow of money to the Communists from abroad, and if Marcos were to die or be toppled and succeeded by a competent, reformist government, it is quite conceivable that the current rapid growth of the Communists could stall. But if the money were to start flowing in substantial amounts and Marcos, who has lost the moral authority necessary to fight the Communists, were to hang onto power, then it is highly likely that Rodolfo Salas will be heading the People's Democratic Republic of the Philippines sometime in the 1990's and unveiling "a Pol Pot future."

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Another Look at the Jewish Vote

Milton Himmelfarb

. . . seeing a man standing opposite him with drawn sword in hand, Joshua went up to him and asked him, "Are you friend or foe?"
—JOSHUA, 5:13

WHILE the Shiites were holding those TWA passengers hostage in Beirut, ABC News-Washington *Post* polled more than a thousand Americans. One question they were asked was whether they agreed or disagreed that "the U.S. should reduce its ties to Israel in order to lessen the acts of terrorism against us in the Middle East." Somewhat more than half disagreed, not wanting the United States to reduce its ties to Israel. About a third agreed, wanting the United States to reduce its ties. The rest had no opinion.

Israel is a major Jewish interest. I postulate that those who did not want the United States to reduce its ties to Israel were more pro-Israel than those who wanted the United States to reduce its ties.

Men, the pro-Reagan (those who approved of "the way Ronald Reagan is handling his job as President"), and Republicans were more pro-Israel than the anti-Reagan (those who disapproved), women, and Democrats:

THE U.S. SHOULD REDUCE ITS TIES TO ISRAEL

	AGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION
		(Percent)	
Total	32	53	15
Pro-Reagan	26	61	14
Anti-Reagan	43	45	12
Democrats	37	50	13
Republicans	28	57	15
Independents	29	53	18
Men	26	62	12
Women	37	45	18

For the excess of pro-Israel over anti-Israel sentiment in each of these categories, subtract the percentage agreeing from the percentage disagreeing. *From most to least pro-Israel, we get*

Men	62 — 26 = 36
Pro-Reagan	61 — 26 = 35
Republicans	57 — 28 = 29
Independents	53 — 29 = 24
Democrats	50 — 37 = 13
Women	45 — 37 = 8
Anti-Reagan	45 — 43 = 2

The pro-Israel margin of the pro-Reagan was 33 points higher than of the anti-Reagan, of men 28 points higher than of women, and of Republicans 16 points higher than of Democrats. It is reasonable to assume that the pro-Reagan were more conservative and the anti-Reagan more liberal, and that as usual men were more hawkish and women more dovish.

For Jews, it was not supposed to be that way.

In the 1984 National Survey of American Jews (NSAJ), conducted by Steven M. Cohen in the first half of that year for the American Jewish Committee,* almost a thousand people answered a questionnaire. They were a representative sample, whose information about themselves closely resembled what was already known about American Jews. For instance, they reported that in 1980 they had given Carter a plurality, Reagan not quite two-fifths, and Anderson not quite a fifth. That is what the networks' exit polls had reported about Jews in 1980.

Jews are one of the more educated and civic groups in America. Only a sixth of the NSAJ respondents had not gone to college; three-fifths were college graduates, and of these a majority also had at least one graduate or professional degree. Nine in ten said they had voted in 1980.

Concerning each of fifteen American groups or institutions these Jews were asked whether they thought most of the members of that group or institution were anti-Semitic, or many were anti-Semitic, or some were, or few were, or whether the respondents were not sure. The highest combined most-or-many-anti-Semitic rating was for

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* *The 1984 National Survey of American Jews: Political and Social Outlooks*, American Jewish Committee, December 1984, 60 pp., $4.00.

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blacks. The lowest most-or-many-anti-Semitic ratings were for Democrats and liberals.

Let us look at the blacks first. When the questionnaire went out Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan were in the news and on Jews' minds. Asked whether they thought Jesse Jackson was anti-Semitic, of the more than four-fifths who were not unsure ten respondents said yes for every one who said no.

It is not prejudice that leads Jews to believe blacks are less well-disposed than whites, because that is what opinion polls routinely show. At the 1984 Democratic convention a Los Angeles *Times* poll found most black delegates with a favorable opinion of Farrakhan, after he had said what he said about Hitler, Jews, and Judaism.

The 1984 NSAJ questionnaire included a kind of popularity contest. Ten groups or institutions were listed, and the respondents were asked whether their impression of each group or institution was generally favorable, or generally unfavorable, or mixed, or whether they had no impression. The NAACP was third most popular, after the UJA and rabbis. Its favorable-minus-unfavorable margin was also third. In a telling reversal, the proportion of respondents with a favorable impression of the NAACP was the same as the proportion who thought most or many blacks were anti-Semitic—54 percent.

Aside from blacks, the groups or institutions rated as more anti-Semitic than average were on the conservative or establishment side: the Pentagon, the State Department, and big business, between 39 and 44 percent most-or-many-anti-Semitic; and Catholics, mainstream Protestants, and fundamentalist Protestants, 40, 42, and 46 percent.

When it comes to ideologies and parties, Jews think they can tell friend from foe:

THINK MOST OR MANY OF THE FOLLOWING GROUPS ARE ANTI-SEMITIC

	Percent
Democrats	6
Liberals	7
Republicans	29
Conservatives	35

Democrats get a low-anti-Semitism rating, while blacks, Christians, and conservatives get high-anti-Semitism ratings. What Democrats are left once you exclude blacks, Christians, and conservatives? (More Democrats call themselves conservative than liberal.) The Democrats Jews call friends are an abstraction. The real, flesh-and-blood Democrats gave a lower-than-average pro-Israel answer in the ABC poll.

Republicans gave a higher-than-average pro-Israel answer, but Jews do not regard them as friends. Those diplomas must surely mean—must they not?—that Jews are smart. In the face of the Republicans' being more pro-Israel than average, it takes a special kind of smartness to think them unfriendly—and in the face, too, of such things as the even division of the eight Jewish Senators between Republican and Democratic, although for every Jewish Republican there are five or even six Jewish Democrats.

In the *Treatise of Human Nature* Hume says: "Reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them." Jews have used reason to justify loyalty to old passions that have become anachronistic passions.

Many more Americans voted for Reagan in 1984 than in 1980. The Democrats nominated Geraldine Ferraro for Vice President because they calculated that she would attract not only women but also Catholics and Italians. Thereupon most women, most Catholics, and most Italians—most Italian Catholic women—voted for Ronald Reagan. The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers went all out against Reagan, and most teachers voted for him.

While the 1984 NSAJ confirmed that in 1980 more Jews had voted for Jimmy Carter than for Reagan, it also showed that, "knowing what you do now," most were glad that it was Reagan who had been elected. That was only one reason why the Jewish vote for Reagan was expected to rise in 1984. In the event, what happened was so exceptional that it became a nine days' wonder. The average of five national exit polls' figures had Jews giving two-thirds to Walter Mondale and a third to Reagan, less than in 1980. In 1985 Steven M. Cohen got over half of his 1984 respondents to answer a new questionnaire, and he has been kind enough to show me the result. They too had gone two to one for Mondale over Reagan.

After the 1968 election I wrote here what was eventually to become an anonymous aphorism, that Jews had the incomes of Episcopalians but voted like Hispanics.* It may no longer be true. First, Episcopalians are not what they used to be. Second, while according to the CBS-New York *Times* exit poll Jews and Hispanics voted about the same in 1984, according to the ABC-Washington *Post* poll the Jewish vote for Mondale was 13 points higher than the Hispanic. Let me rephrase the aphorism: Jews vote like Hispanics, only more so.

The prevailing explanation of the Jewish vote in 1984 is that by election day most Jews felt that the Christian Right, identified with the Republicans, was more of a threat than Jesse Jackson, identified with the Democrats. If only because the Republican convention was later than the Democratic one, on election day the alarm that the Christian Right occasioned among Jews was fresher, less dissipated by time, than the alarm occasioned by Jesse Jackson. Besides, Jews think they need worry less about blacks than about

* "Is American Jewry in Crisis?" March 1969.

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white Christians, because blacks are weak and white Christians are strong: in Cohen's 1985 NSAJ almost nine in ten characterized "American Christians" as "powerful" and "secure." By "Christians" Jews usually mean white Christians.

Anecdotal evidence supports this explanation. A Democratic activist told me about his debates before Jewish audiences in California. As soon as his Republican opponents started to do well, as they often did, he would cry, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!"—the Christian Right has taken over the Republican party and must not be allowed to take over the country. That never failed.

A Republican activist told me how impervious Jews were to his questions.

Q. Jackson and Farrakhan?

A. Yes, but they're only black.

Q. Assad and Arafat's friend Jackson's probable veto power over a victorious Mondale's choice of a Secretary of State, and what that would mean for Israel?

A. Mondale won't give him that veto. Besides, not to worry, the fact that we're voting for Mondale doesn't mean we really expect him to win. [This is another way of saying, "The Gentiles will protect us by not voting like us."]

Q. The Democratic convention refusing to consider a resolution condemning anti-Semitism and racism, in contrast to the Republican convention applauding Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and Jeane J. Kirkpatrick's denunciation of anti-Semitism and praise of Israel?

A. Yes, well, that Democratic convention thing was bad, but didn't a committee say something or other afterward to make up for it? And what difference do resolutions really make?

My last bit of anecdotal evidence comes from an academic political scientist who has done important work in government. After the election he and I agreed that Jews had voted more from the gut than on issues. Then he told me about his brother, a professor of economics in a great university, who preferred Reagan on the economy to Mondale but proceeded to vote for Mondale. Asked why, this professor in a great university said, "I watched the Republicans on television, and they didn't look like my kind of people."

Just possibly, the plausibility and the anecdotes may be yet another case of what everybody knows to be so that is not necessarily so. Of Cohen's 1985 respondents only one in six or seven had voted primarily against Jackson(ism) or against Falwell(ism). Further, of those who had so voted more voted for Reagan on account of Jackson (9 percent, higher than a quarter of all Reagan voters) than for Mondale on account of the Moral Majority (6 percent, fewer than a tenth of all Mondale voters). Or so they said.

They were also asked, "In your view, who would have posed a greater threat to the interests of American Jews: Jesse Jackson (in the event Mondale were elected), or the Moral Majority (as a result of Reagan's victory)?" A third said Jesse Jackson, more than the quarter that said the Moral Majority. An eighth said neither, almost a fifth said both, and a tenth were not sure.

A CARTOON that is a favorite with producers and consumers of polls shows a pollster shouting at a man he is interviewing, "Those are the worst opinions I've ever heard!" A number of NSAJ percentages bring that to mind.

There are contradictions or at least ambivalences that I can accept with a smile, probably because they are mine too. For instance, two successive agree-or-disagree questions in 1984:

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
		(Percent)	
In general, I support . . . welfare and food stamps	75	17	8
. . . [W]elfare and food stamps have had many bad effects on the very people they're supposed to help	64	23	13

Some are harder to accept with a smile. Again, successive items in 1984:

To help reduce deficits and relieve world tensions, U.S. military spending should be cut	59	27	14
In order to be a reliable military supplier of Israel, the U.S. should maintain a strong military capacity	61	24	15

Successively!

Some evoke a kind of pity for the poor little rich girl. At a time when prejudice and discrimination are lower than ever before:

Anti-Semitism in America is currently not a serious problem for American Jews	40	47	13
Virtually all positions of influence in America are open to Jews	31	58	11

On the other hand,

The U.S. has offered Jews more opportunities and freedom than any other Diaspora country	83	6	10

This is at any rate not inconsistent with

Capitalism works better than socialism	73	7	20

Jewish self-definitions are elastic.

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With a quarter of the respondents calling themselves conservative, why did only an eighth oppose government aid for abortions for poor women? In the old joke about a Jew wearing a captain's cap to go with the boat he has just bought, his mother says to him, "By me you're a captain, by your father you're a captain, but by the captains are you a captain?" By the conservatives, how many Jews who call themselves conservative are really conservative? It is easy to be Right of the Jewish Center and Left of the Gentile Center.

Similarly, with more than a quarter doubting or denying that capitalism works better than socialism, why did only 1 percent call themselves radical or socialist?

THE worst opinion was this:

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
		(Percent)	
President Reagan was basically accurate when he called the Soviet Union an "evil empire"	50	35	15

This was a question about truth. They had the next item for agreeing with the worldly wisdom that *toute vérité n'est pas bonne à dire*, not every truth should be told.

Whether or not President Reagan was factually correct, he displayed poor judgment in calling the Soviet Union an "evil empire"	66	25	9

Of the half who disagreed or were unsure that the Soviet Union is an evil empire, Cohen writes: "Were the President more popular among Jews, the 'basically accurate' statement probably would have received more support." Suppose Jews were asked to agree or disagree with this, in a future survey: "President Reagan was basically accurate when he called the state of Israel a friendly democracy." Would half disagree or be unsure? Would more agree only if Senator Kennedy or Senator Hart called Israel a friendly democracy?

In calling the Soviet Union what he did, President Reagan was saying two things about it, that it was an empire and that it was evil. According to the Book of Esther, the Persian empire extended from India to Ethiopia and comprised 127 provinces, each with its own people and language. The Soviet Union extends from East Prussia to Japan. I do not know the number of its provinces, but the number of languages spoken in it is said to exceed 500. Who can deny or doubt that a country like that is an empire? It must have been President Reagan's adjective, evil, that aroused the resistance.

Why, especially among Jews? Besides all the other fine qualities and deeds of the Soviet Union, it is also the enemy of Judaism, Jews, and Israel. In the Soviet Union, Hebrew teachers are sent to prison. Hebrew teachers! There's a gang of desperadoes for you. Yet only half of American Jews could bring themselves to agree that the Soviet Union is an evil empire.

The cause of this oddity is that so many Jews are doves. Admit that the Soviet Union is an evil empire and you may have to admit that it has evil intentions. Certain dovish positions then become harder to hold on to, like cutting the U.S. defense budget. The way out is to deny or doubt reality, to say that the Soviet Union is not or may not be an evil empire. Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions.

About Israel, Jews tell themselves that they can eat their cake and have it. In 1984 three in five agreed that "U.S. military spending should be cut" and immediately thereafter also agreed that "to be a reliable military supplier of Israel, the U.S. should maintain a strong military capacity." In 1985 more than half denied both that "major reductions in U.S. defense spending will weaken the security of the U.S." and that such "major reductions . . . will weaken the ability of the U.S. to support Israel." As the Duke of Wellington said to the man who addressed him as "Mr. Jones, I believe?"—if you can believe that, you can believe anything.

In 1985 Cohen asked some questions probing for a kind of Judaic altruism, and he found it. Eight agreed for every one who disagreed that "Jewish values, as I understand them, teach us that we must make economic sacrifices for the poor." In another question respondents were asked to agree or disagree that "taxes on the middle class should be kept low or reduced." Two in three agreed and only one in six disagreed. Two questions later, they were asked about a Jewish interest in low taxes: "Since more Jews are now middle-class, Jewish interests dictate support for candidates who favor lower taxes and limits on government spending." Agreement dropped to less than half and disagreement rose to three in eight. That is, Jews sympathize with an undifferentiated middle class rather more than with themselves as members of the middle class. In the first, general instance, but not in the second, Jewish instance, it is as if they thought of the middle class as poor, and about the poor they know what the right answer is. It is also true that the first statement sounds like Gary Hart and the second like Jack Kemp.

For Israel, American Jews refuse to sacrifice not economically but psychologically. One question was about agreement or disagreement with the proposition that "even though many Jews think that some black leaders are anti-Semitic or anti-Israel, American Jews should still try to improve relations with the black community." It was no contest. Very few were unsure, and eleven agreed

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for every one who disagreed. A later question was about agreement or disagreement with this: "Since the Christian Right has been very pro-Israel, American Jews should overlook their objections to the Christian Right's ideas about America, and work more closely with it to help Israel." Only one in five agreed, a majority disagreed, and a little more than a quarter were unsure. In the 1984 NSAJ popularity contest, only the JDL and the Moral Majority had received a higher unfavorable than favorable rating, with the Moral Majority far more unpopular than even the JDL.

What are "the Christian Right's ideas about America" that Jews object to? One of those ideas is prayer in the public schools. If the 1984 NSAJ showed Jews opposing by more than three to one a moment of silent meditation in the public schools, all the more must they be opposed to prayer in the public schools. But a recent poll has found that five in six blacks and two in five black leaders agree with the Christian Right about prayer in the public schools.

A related "idea about America" that Jews ascribe to the Christian Right is the blurring of the distinction not only between church and state, but also between religion and politics, between preacher and politician. In that respect, too, blacks are closer to the Christian Right than to Jews. A significant proportion of leading black politicians and public figures have been ministers, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Mayor Andrew Young of Atlanta, Congressman William A. Gray of Pennsylvania, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson, whose campaign for the Democratic nomination depended heavily on the black churches and clergy.

Yet Jews sensibly do not tell blacks that if they continue to be less than zealous for the separation of church and state or of religion and politics—let alone opposition to quotas—Jews will not work more closely with them to help Israel. On the contrary, Jews think that it is they who "should still try to improve relations" with blacks. Toward the Christian Right, Jews are less accommodating. In effect they will not deign to allow it to work with them to help Israel unless it stops being the Christian Right.

With all their Judaic sympathy for the needy, American Jews contrive to forget that Israel is very needy indeed — almost friendless, in need of all the friends it can get. Will the American Friends Service Committee, will the bureaucracies of the liberal churches rush in to befriend Israel if the Christian Right stops being friendly? An opening to the Christian Right would subject Jews to the discomfort of thinking new thoughts and doing new things. Apparently Israel is not thought to be worth such a grievous sacrifice.

Saul Bellow has recalled that when he was young he and his friends once outdid themselves in advanced dialectic. His uncle had less education than they but more common sense. Afterward he said, "Smart, smart, but so dumb!" The English say "too clever by half" and "silly-clever." Americans say, "Too smart is dumb."

JEWISH dumb smartness is inveterate. Is it also incorrigible? Let us consider the 1984 election again.

Lyndon B. Johnson liked to tell the story of a young man in the depression who had just graduated from normal school and was being interviewed for a teaching job in a small town in Texas. The chairman of the school board, a Southern Baptist deacon, asked him, "In biology, do you teach Darwin or do you teach Genesis?" The young man answered, "I can do it either way." Did the Jewish vote in 1984 show continuity with old ways, or did it show change? You can interpret it either way.

With delight, liberals greeted the Jewish vote as proving continuity. They saluted the Jews for holding fast to a tradition of unselfish compassion when the rest of America was marching shameless under the banner of "What's in it for me?" as well as for holding fast to a tradition of pursuing peace when the voice of the militarist was heard in the land. They taunted Jewish (neo)conservatives for delivering only a third of the Jewish vote to Reagan.

That is the case for continuity. The case for change is basically this: "What do you mean, *only* a third of the Jewish vote? Some 'only'!"

First something must be said about the self-righteous hypocrisy of denouncing Reagan voters for pursuing selfish interest. Democrats lament the dissolution of the New Deal coalition. What was the secret of that coalition's success if not appeal to the interest of each of its constituent groups? In 1984 it was the Democrats who were widely perceived as pandering to the interest of every bloc and caucus that made enough noise, while the Republicans went out of their way to appear to address the electorate as Americans simply. Most people who said they were better off than four years earlier voted for Reagan, and most who said they were worse off voted for Mondale. I remember that one poll also reported on people who said that while they themselves were worse off, they thought the country as a whole was better off. Of these most voted for Reagan. Even people with annual incomes under $12,500 voted for Mondale only eleven to nine over Reagan. What was in it for such Reagan voters?

As to the Jewish vote in 1984, in retrospect it can be seen that what misled the forecasters was the exceptionalness of 1980. It now seems clear that a big part of the 1980 Jewish vote for Reagan was the desire of many Jews to punish Carter. Edward Kennedy beat Carter in the 1980 New York Democratic primary mostly because three in eight voters in that primary were Jews, and they gave Kennedy four votes for every vote they gave Carter.

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Only a third for Reagan in 1984? Jews gave a tenth to FDR's opponents and Goldwater, and a fifth to Nixon running against Humphrey. One-third was the previous modern Republican high for Jews, in 1972, when McGovern the unpopular was the Democratic candidate. In 1976 Jews had no particular cause for attraction to Carter or for repulsion from Ford. Voting by party loyalty and habit, they then gave about three-quarters of their votes to Carter. In 1984 they gave less than that to a much more appealing Democrat. Mondale did well with Jews in the primaries. He had been anointed by Hubert Humphrey, whom Jews loved dearly and who in turn had been anointed by Eleanor Roosevelt, whom they loved even more dearly—more dearly, in fact, than they loved FDR himself. Instead of saying that only a third of the Jewish vote went to the Republican in 1984, you could as well say that only two-thirds went to the Democrat. If continuity is there, so is change.

ONLY from an American perspective has the left-of-bankbook voting of American Jews been an anomaly. From a worldwide modern Jewish perspective it was the norm. Until only the day before yesterday, as historical time goes, it was still true, as Jews had learned over and over, in country after country, that their chief enemies were on the Right.

But that was the day before yesterday, not today. Even for Jews, sooner or later reality can break in and undermine old, cozy beliefs and behaviors. That has already happened in France and Great Britain.

In France, according to Shmuel Trigano and Jacky Akoka (*Jerusalem Letter* of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, May 23, 1985), an exit poll in 1983 showed that

> the Jewish electorate differed from the rest of the electorate in the 1981 and 1983 elections in that it voted more sharply to the Left in 1981 than did the nation as a whole (65 percent as compared to 57 percent) and showed a more pronounced shift to the Right in 1983 (59.7 [?!] percent as compared to 49 percent). . . . The Jewish electorate is characterized by greater than average electoral mobility.

In Great Britain change has been especially dramatic, as Robert Silver reports (*Economist*, December 15, 1984):

> In 1966, there were 40 Jewish MP's, 38 of them Labour. . . . In 1974, there were 46 Jewish Members of the House of Commons—35 Labour, ten Conservative, and one Liberal. . . . By 1983, the distribution had been radically reversed. There were 29 Jewish MP's—17 of them Conservative. . . .
>
> Recent Labour party conferences have seen the passage of pro-Palestinian resolutions. The party is tainted by association with the New Left where there has recently been disturbing evidence of a revival of anti-Semitic motifs in anti-Zionist literature.

Most French and British Jews, and certainly most Israelis, would not agree with most American Jews that deep cuts in the United States defense budget will neither weaken the United States nor lessen its ability to help Israel, or that Jews can help Israel by spurning Israel's strongest Gentile supporters. American Jews, lucky beneficiaries of a reality less harsh than that of Israelis and French and British Jews, have not yet been forced to stop indulging in the luxury of self-delusion.

It will be a miracle if the luck never runs out. The Rabbis forbid us to rely on miracles.

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Scuttling an Empire

Elie Kedourie

WHEN Admiral of the Fleet Earl Mountbatten of Burma was murdered by Irish terrorists in the summer of 1979, he was an old man full of honors, who could look back with satisfaction on a long life filled with achievement. He had been the last Viceroy of India under the British Raj, whom the political leaders of the newly independent India invited to be its first Governor General; he went on to become First Sea Lord and chief of the Defense Staff. During World War II, before his viceroyalty, he had been appointed, when only forty-three, Supreme Allied Commander in Southeast Asia, and two years before that Churchill had made him director of Combined Operations.

His pedigree was as distinguished as his achievements. His mother was a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, his father a descendant of the princely house of Hesse-Darmstadt who became First Sea Lord and Marquess of Milford Haven. He himself was the uncle of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. His marriage was just as dazzling as his pedigree: when only twenty-two, he had married Edwina Ashley, daughter of a Conservative Member of Parliament (and later Lord Mount Temple), a descendant of the Earl of Shaftesbury, from whom she inherited the estate of Broadlands and Classiebawn Castle near Sligo in Ireland. It was there that Mountbatten was spending the summer when the IRA murdered him with other members of his family. Edwina's grandfather on her mother's side was the financier Sir Ernest Cassel who left £7.5 million. She was his favorite granddaughter, to whom he left Brook House in Park Lane and £30,000 a year, subject to a life interest in favor of his sister; in addition, Edwina received the lion's share of the residue of his estate amounting to £2.3 million.

A magnifico, then, a grandee, eminently suited to have his career and exploits recounted and celebrated. Philip Ziegler has indeed done him proud, with a long and copious life—well-proportioned, lucid, and very readable.* He calls it the official biography, but it is not the dull marmoreal monument which the label may lead one to fear. Ziegler is frank and open about his subject; nor, to their credit, do Mountbatten's family seem to have attempted to inhibit the author's judgments, or to have pressed him to hide or palliate episodes relating to Mountbatten's married life which might, with some justice, have been considered to belong to the private more than to the public man.

In his last chapter, Ziegler tells us that during the writing of the biography, there was a time when he became so enraged by certain traits of his subject that he found it necessary to place on his desk a notice saying: REMEMBER, IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING, HE WAS A GREAT MAN. Do we then rise from the almost 800 pages of this work convinced of Mountbatten's greatness—greatness as one thinks of it when, say, Churchill or Wellington comes to mind? Is this the impression of the man which the attentive reader carries away with him from a study of Ziegler's researches?

MOUNTBATTEN began and ended his career as a naval officer, and the viceroyalty of India for which he is best known was only an interval in a sailor's life. The incidents of his naval career, the manner in which he faced the emergencies and exigencies of war may, then, provide a clue to his character as a man of action. For this is what he eminently was. As the book shows, he was not at home with ideas; he was not particularly well-read, had little intellectual curiosity, and lacked subtlety and sophistication. These, of course, are not necessary qualities in a man of action, and they may even prove to be impediments. What then was Mountbatten like as a man of action?

In the summer of 1939 he became captain of a destroyer, the *Kelly*, which soon saw action off the Norwegian coast. Trying to intercept a vessel which had been captured by a German battleship, Mountbatten "made what two at least of his officers felt to be an elementary and inexplicable mistake," and failed in his mission. He followed this by purposelessly executing a reckless maneuver: while going at high speed in very rough seas, he ordered an abrupt turn which caused his ship

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* *Mountbatten*, Knopf, 784 pp., $24.95.

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to be hit by a great wave and to heel over fifty degrees to starboard; "as was his wont, he was ordering full steam ahead out of sheer impatience to reach wherever he was heading to start on something else." The *Kelly* went into drydock for repairs.

An expedition to harass German minelayers off the Dutch coast after the *Kelly* had been repaired crippled it once more. Ziegler writes that the *Kelly* should not have been where it was when it was attacked and badly damaged by a torpedo from a German submarine:

> Mountbatten allowed himself to be diverted in fruitless search of a U-boat. He then dallied too long in pursuit. . . . Finally, he had compounded his errors by making conspicuous and unnecessary signals. A report prepared for the benefit of the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, concluded that Mountbatten had blundered into a trap. Even if that attributes too much cunning to the Germans, it is evident that he contributed largely to his own undoing.

Again in November 1940, while captain of a flotilla of destroyers, he led his force in an engagement with an inferior German force which left his own ship crippled and almost sinking while the Germans escaped with superficial damage: "The weight of naval opinion is that Mountbatten blundered."

It is worthwhile dwelling on these early episodes in Mountbatten's career because they seem to show that, though physically courageous and hard-working, he did not possess a cool and steady judgment when quick decisions in critical and dangerous situations were needed. Ziegler compares his style as a naval commander to his style as the driver of a car. He drove fast and dangerously. If he was trying to pass a car in front of him and saw another car approaching from the opposite direction he thought it best to accelerate and press on. On the way to his house, the servants would point out black stains on the road and say: "Look, his Lordship's skid marks!" "If a destroyer could leave skid marks," Ziegler comments, "*Kelly* would have disfigured every sea in which she sailed." The unanimous judgment of those of his peers who expressed an opinion about his qualities as a captain was that "by the highest standards, he was no better than second-rate."

It is very interesting and instructive that General Pownall, who acted as Mountbatten's Chief of Staff in Southeast Asia, came to much the same conclusion as Mountbatten's colleagues and superiors in the Navy. In an appreciation written at the end of his service with Mountbatten, Pownall declares that his chief had great drive and initiative but was apt to leap before he looked, and was too impulsive by far. Pownall also considers that Mountbatten was undoubtedly conceited, that he liked talking instead of hearing, weighing, and deciding. These characteristics no doubt have something to do with his failings, whether in war or political negotiation.

While still a cadet, Mountbatten went to Cambridge as an undergraduate in 1919. There, he made the acquaintance of another undergraduate, Peter Murphy who, until he died in 1966, remained a very close friend, confidant, and counselor. Murphy was strongly left wing, and "opened Mountbatten's eyes to what he believed to be the inherent flaws of capitalism." Mountbatten's own intellectual resources were, as Ziegler observes, limited, and this leftism remained an abiding predisposition throughout his life. The more so in that Murphy's influence was greatly reinforced by his wife's convictions and prejudices. For Edwina Mountbatten admired all things of the Left, was indeed a committed left-winger. Visiting Moscow in 1936, at the height of the Stalinist purges, she wrote:

> It's fascinating being here again and seeing the progress everything has made since 1929 . . . it's gone ahead by leaps and bounds. . . . I gather shorter hours, higher wages, *and* lower prices (not only from what Intourist tell one!!) and the people on the whole are contented, and the young ones happy and enthusiastic.

Ziegler also discloses that from an early period of their married life Edwina was unfaithful to her husband, and that he too had "at least two protracted love affairs outside his marriage." These affairs of the bedroom are usually of little relevance to a public career, nor is it easy to say what effect adultery and other sexual irregularities have on the political stance or the political capacities either of those who practice them or of their victims. In a cynical age people learn to take rakish behavior in their stride, but in this particular case there are indications and hints that Edwina's way of life affected Mountbatten's character as a public figure, and perhaps also his judgment.

Ziegler speculates that the sense of inferiority and failure which Edwina's behavior instilled in her husband was perhaps in part responsible for "the furious ambition" with which he pursued his career. But the matter is perhaps even more complicated. There is quoted in this book a remarkable letter dating from 1944—twenty-two years after Mountbatten's marriage—in which he commiserates with his wife over the marriage of her "established lover":

> I must tell you again how deeply and sincerely I feel for you at this moment when, however unselfish you may be about A.'s engagement, the fact that it is bound to alter the relationship—though I feel convinced not the friendship—which has existed between you, is bound to upset you emotionally and make you feel unhappy.
>
> You have however still got the love and genu-

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> ine affection of two chaps—A. and me—and the support of all your many friends.
>
> You have only one more bad patch in front of you—the week A. gets married.

It is of course very difficult for an outsider to penetrate into the peculiar emotional reaches where such a letter from a husband to a wife becomes intelligible and taken for granted. The biographer is better placed than any ordinary reader to put it in its proper context, and make sense of it. Ziegler, however, is content simply to cite it without comment.

Not that Mountbatten is the first or only complaisant husband. In the 18th century, Lady Melbourne, mother of the Prime Minister, was the mistress of Lord Egremont who is said to have bought her from Lord Coleraine for £13,000, of which she took a share. We may be sure that none of those who were party to such transactions or any of their circle would have dreamed of speaking in so mawkish a fashion about their partner's or their own sexual adventures. A cool, astringent style, like that, say, of Choderlos de Laclos, they would have considered much more appropriate.

Nor would they have cared sentimentally to mix public business and private entanglements. For this is what may have happened when Mountbatten was Governor General of India. Countess Mountbatten, it would seem, developed a "relationship" with the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. It was "intensely loving, romantic, trusting, generous, idealistic, even spiritual. If there was any physical element it can only have been of minor importance to either party." In 1952 Edwina asked her husband to keep Nehru's letters for her. Some of these, she wrote, were "love letters in a sense, though you yourself well realize the strange relationship—most of it spiritual—that exists between us." These words, it appears, "repaired the only injury that the relationship had done him, that sometimes he had felt himself not merely excluded but kept in the dark." He assured her that he knew and had always understood "the very special relationship between Jawaharlal and you." Indeed this was made the easier "by my fondness and admiration for him."

Ziegler declares that to call this a triangle, or Mountbatten a complaisant husband, "would be to belittle a relationship that was enriching to all concerned." He could be right. Still, we may fairly conclude that the man who was to become the last Viceroy had in him a powerful streak both of impetuosity and of sentimentality likely to affect a political judgment which was anyway swayed by the leftism to which he was clearly partial, through the influence both of his wife and of his lifelong friend, Peter Murphy.

As the Supreme Commander in Southeast Asia, Mountbatten had to deal with the aftermath of the Japanese occupation. Time and again he was to favor indigenous left-wingers in the belief that they represented the inevitable wave of the future, and that they were simply struggling for national freedom. He believed, for instance, that the Chinese Communists were "not Communists in the Russian sense at all, and that their territory is far more justly and competently governed than that of the central government." He favored and supported the Communists in Malaya. Ziegler writes:

> At a ceremony in Singapore after liberation the Supreme Commander presented medals to a large gathering of resistance leaders. The ceremony was much photographed. Mountbatten's critics alleged that the resulting pictures were of great value to the British security forces for the identification of the terrorist leaders in Malaya's long-drawn-out civil war.

Mountbatten's opinions were by no means eccentric. A great many officials and political figures shared his illusions. Thus, U.S. intelligence is quoted here as declaring that the Vietminh League was not Communist, and stood for "freedom and reforms from French harshness." It is of course true that Western dominance had been shaken and discredited in the whole of Southeast Asia by the Japanese invasion. Whether the former masters could now resume their rule when they themselves had been ruined by the effort to defeat the Nazis was by no means clear. But if they did not, then the prospect in Southeast Asia was a somber one. Corruption, arbitrariness, insecurity, oppression by local rulers, and fearful doctrinaire experiments were what anyone with a modicum of political judgment should have expected, and what, in the event, has by and large ensued. What counts against Mountbatten and the legion of *bien pensants* who thought like him is their blithe assurance that, once power had been placed in native hands, an era of freedom and prosperity would surely dawn.

It was in Burma that Mountbatten—helped and fortified no doubt by Murphy, who was employed to go through papers sent to the Supreme Commander for decision, and to produce concise summaries with proposals—was able to apply his theories to the utmost. He disagreed with the Governor, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, whom he dismissed as a reactionary blimp, and who was suspicious of Aung San, the leader of the Burma National Army. Mountbatten advocated handing over power to Aung San and his party, and his advice was followed by Attlee, the new Labor Prime Minister. "The ultimate vindication of Mountbatten's policies," writes his biographer, "would have been Aung San's emergence as a wise and benevolent statesman. He was murdered, along with most of his ministers, before he had a chance to prove himself." But this is to beg the whole question, for Aung San's murder by political rivals betokens a polity in which it is vain to

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expect stability, freedom, and prosperity, however wise and benevolent a particular political leader might be—a polity, in fact, where wise and benevolent intentions are quickly denatured and invariably pave the proverbial road to hell. The history of Burma since its independence gives no warrant for thinking otherwise.

IT SEEMS that Mountbatten's advice on Burmese affairs found favor with Attlee. In any case, Mountbatten had no difficulty in accommodating himself to the Labor government which came to power in July 1945, and with whose prominent members he contrived to establish contact shortly after they assumed office. When, therefore, Attlee decided toward the end of 1946 that Viscount Wavell, who had been Viceroy of India since 1943, had to go, Mountbatten must have readily occurred to him as a most suitable replacement.

Wavell had to go because the government considered that he was no longer able to cope with the Indian political situation. The problem was how to reconcile the demands of the Indian Congress party with those of the Muslim League. A Cabinet mission had visited India in 1946 but had failed to achieve a settlement. Wavell now said that the failure of the mission made the governance of India impossible. Either the British should withdraw from India, evacuating British armed forces, officials, and their dependents province by province starting from the south and gradually concentrating them in the north, the whole operation to be completed by March 1948, or else they should resolve to stay and govern the place for fifteen years, until the Congress and the League could be brought to a more accommodating frame of mind. Neither alternative pleased the government. The first was considered to be a shameful scuttle, while the second went against the emancipatory views of the administration, and moreover constituted a burden which it was not prepared to shoulder.

When Mountbatten was approached, he laid down a condition which the government accepted. This condition was in reality little different from what Wavell had proposed and what had been denounced as a scuttle. What Mountbatten insisted on was a fixed date for handing over power, whether or not the Indian leaders had reached an acceptable settlement; otherwise, Indians would never believe that he and the government were really determined to get rid of India. The government agreed to his condition, and Mountbatten's final instructions therefore laid it down that he should aim at June 1, 1948 as the effective date for the transfer of power.

The leader of the Muslim League, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, was adamant that the Indian Muslims should have their own state, and not be under Hindu domination. The Congress leaders were equally opposed to the partition of India. Wavell had not been able to see a way around this difficulty. Mountbatten's insistence that the transfer of power should take place on a specified date less than eighteen months after his arrival in India was a high-risk policy. For all that Jinnah had to do was to remain adamant until June 2, 1948, and he would then obtain his Pakistan.

But the partition of India, as many pointed out, was a prospect fraught with violence and horror. Mountbatten—and the British government which had agreed to his condition—inflexibly committed to the transfer of power on a fixed date a few months hence, found themselves inexorably driving toward an inevitable crash. The crash was inevitable owing to the fear and panic which the prospect of partition would provoke among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs hitherto living side by side. They had been able to coexist because they could rely on the British Raj to maintain order and public security. If this disappeared, suddenly and in short order, then intercommunal hostility would flare up and trust would disappear, life and property would be in danger, and men would kill lest they themselves be killed. Only timely precautions could possibly hope to avoid that which it is the plain duty of any civilized government to prevent.

Mountbatten's timetable left no scope for the discharge of this duty. Even Jinnah could scarcely believe that the Viceroy would accept and will this consequence of his strategy. In a conversation which they had in April 1947 (quoted in *The Great Divide* by H.V. Hodson) Mountbatten explained to Jinnah how difficult it was to partition India and divide the Indian army in the time which remained before the deadline he had set himself. Jinnah "smiled in a cryptic way and asked, 'How then do you propose to leave at that time—do you intend to turn this country over to chaos and bloodshed and civil war?' "

Mountbatten arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1947. By the beginning of May, he had come to the conclusion that there was no prospect of a united India, that partition was inevitable. He drew up a scheme for partition with options for Bengal and the Punjab—which contained sizable Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communities—to be split between India and Pakistan, to join in entirety with either state, or to go it alone. The plan was sent to London for approval by the Cabinet. Nehru, however, when he was unofficially shown a copy, vehemently objected to some features, and Mountbatten had to fly to London to persuade the Cabinet to make changes to meet Nehru's objections. He left New Delhi on May 18 and came back on May 31. On June 2 and 3 the Viceroy met the Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh leaders and secured their approval. On June 4 the plan was published and Mountbatten held a press conference. It was there that he divulged that the transfer of power would take place on August 15, 1947, i.e., in less than ten weeks. Ziegler declares

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that there is little evidence that this or any other precise date had been established beforehand with his advisers, with Whitehall, or with the Indian leaders. Mountbatten's sudden decision to accelerate the transfer of power puts one in mind of his habits as a driver and as a captain of destroyers.

THE creation of Pakistan meant the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. In the event, this proved to mean massive and panic-stricken movements of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs determined not to stay where they would be ruled by their enemies, with their lives continually at risk. In the Punjab it also meant horrific massacres by Sikhs of Muslims, and by Muslims of Sikhs and Hindus. Mountbatten does not seem to have expected serious trouble. To a Sikh Maharajah who told him at the end of April that the Sikhs meant to fight the Muslims, he said that if the Sikhs started a war he would not hesitate to crush them. He repeated the threat to the Sikh leader Sardar Baldev Singh and warned him that in such an event he would instruct him, as Defense Member in the Executive Council, to use the army and air force to fight them. A Muslim leader of the Congress reported him as saying:

> I shall see to it that there is no bloodshed and riot. I am a soldier, not a civilian. Once partition is accepted in principle, I shall issue orders to see that there are no communal disturbances in the country. If there should be the slightest agitation, I shall adopt the sternest measures to nip the trouble in the bud. I shall not use even the armed police. I will order the army and air force to act and I will use tanks and aeroplanes to suppress anybody who wants to create trouble.

In the upshot, this proved to be empty bombast.

The victims of the Punjab bloodletting amounted, at a conservative estimate, to some 200,000. The Governor General, however, believed that "only" 100,000 people had died. Whatever the exact figure, the ghastly slaughter in the summer of 1947 betokens a radical failure of the British Raj and of the man who was at its head.

It has been argued that given Jinnah's absolute determination to establish Pakistan, the massacres, the hordes of refugees, the suffering, and the heartache became inevitable. The argument smacks of justification ex post facto. The decision to set a fixed date for relinquishing British power made Mountbatten a lame-duck Viceroy from the moment he set foot in India. And it is this decision which served to give Jinnah's determination its doom-laden quality.

It has also been argued (most cogently by Sir Penderel Moon in *Divide and Quit*) that the Sikhs of the Punjab were willy-nilly determined not to be subject to Muslim rule, and hence were determined to expel by force the Muslims of East Punjab (awarded to India) in order to make room for the Sikhs who would have to leave West Punjab (awarded to Pakistan), and that a delay in the transfer of power would have made no difference at all.

However cogent, these arguments remain speculative. They assume that Sikh determination was a fixed quantity, unshakable and irresistible whatever the circumstances, and whatever the actions of the authorities and of the other parties involved. But consider Bengal, where antagonism between Muslim and Hindu cannot have been any less virulent than that between Muslim and Sikh in the Punjab. Massacres were averted in Bengal at the partition because, it is widely argued, Gandhi went to Calcutta and brought troubles to a stop by deciding to fast unto death. If Gandhi is supposed to have changed the course of events in Bengal, why should events in the Punjab have taken an inexorable and fated course?

It appears that one reason Mountbatten advanced the date of the transfer of power from June 1948 to August 1947 was that if independence came at the earlier date, Congress would agree to leave India in the Commonwealth. To keep India in the Commonwealth was considered by many in London to be of the utmost importance. The Chiefs of Staff believed that if India were in the Commonwealth, it would take part in the defense of the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. This was pure illusion.

Mountbatten also believed in the Commonwealth. His vision was that of a Commonwealth much wider than that composed of the lands of British settlement, but which would still preserve the same traditions of constitutional and parliamentary rule. This too was an absurd illusion, which many officials both in Britain and in India scoffed at and dismissed.

They were, of course, right. The Commonwealth is, today, little more than a Third World pressure group, many of whose members, India foremost among them, belong to, and are active in, the nonaligned movement. It was clearly a misjudgment on the part of Mountbatten and the Chiefs of Staff to set such store by India's membership in the Commonwealth, and to entertain such expectations of the Commonwealth as a power bloc. This is not hindsight, since the difficulty of getting the Commonwealth countries to act together, even when its members were bound by strong ties of kinship and sentiment, was well-known at the time, and since many officials, as has been said, did point out the fundamental change which the Commonwealth would suffer should states like India join it.

AS HIS view of the Commonwealth and its importance shows, Mountbatten's was an essentially commonplace mind, lacking a cutting edge where politics was concerned. Just as he uncritically accepted that the Commonwealth

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was a good thing and a powerful force in the world, so he was also a devotee of the United Nations: "Idealistic, international, progressive, dedicated to the cause of peace, the United Nations was irresistibly attractive to Mountbatten. . . . World government might be a distant prospect, but it was a dream which he would have felt it cowardly to dismiss."

Mountbatten's combined illusions about the Commonwealth and the United Nations made their best showing during the Suez crisis in the summer of 1956. He was then First Sea Lord and, when the crisis erupted, acting chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. Through Edwina he was kept informed of Nehru's opposition to, and deep disapproval of, Eden's policy. Edwina criticized Mountbatten for being too loyal a servant of the government. But Mountbatten defended himself against the accusation, "I'm sorry," he wrote to her in August 1956, "we seem so often to have got at cross purposes about Egypt. Basically we feel the same and I am doing all and more than I ought to do as a serving officer to try and work for a peaceful solution."

Indeed, Mountbatten adamantly opposed military action against Nasser, and made his views known to the other Chiefs of Staff, to various Ministers, and to Eden himself. He also threatened to resign, but in the end did not do so. He believed that the Middle East conflict was about "ideas, emotions, loyalties" and that these could not be fought with troops and weapons. He deplored the effect on the British way of life of exposing troops to the moral damage which they would suffer if they were to act as an occupation army in Egypt. He believed that the Egyptian people were "solidly" behind Nasser, and that an attack on Egypt would unleash serious and continual disorder elsewhere in the Middle East. He seems also to have believed that for a serving officer to obey orders to attack Egypt was analogous to German officers obeying the orders of the Nazi government—an act for which they had been convicted at Nuremberg. He also registered "the strongest possible protest" at the Navy's having to take part in operations in which civilians might be injured. When the United Nations General Assembly called for a cease-fire, Mountbatten wrote to the Prime Minister. He expressed his belief that "a just and lasting settlement of any dispute" could not be worked out under a threat of military action, and he appealed to Eden to accept the resolution of the overwhelming majority of the United Nations to cease military operations.

As his language shows, Mountbatten was ignorant of the character of politics in Egypt and the Middle East. He clearly equated the subjects of Oriental despotisms with the citizens of free states, and assumed that they too were moved by the same active loyalty to their leaders and institutions. In this, he was simply repeating the received opinion current in the left-wing circles whose judgment he tended to respect. But what is puzzling in someone who had been a naval officer all his life is the belief that military power is not to be used because civilians might get hurt in the process, and that anyway no settlement of a dispute between states can be reached under threat of military action.

MOUNTBATTEN's outlook on Suez, the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and the partition of India was by no means eccentric. On the contrary, he shared this outlook with a great many among the British political and official classes. Compounded of muddle and illusion, it issued in a decadent, cynical, and complacent defeatism which marked these classes in the postwar decades—a defeatism demeaning to the erstwhile imperial rulers and ruinous to the multitudes who had been ruled and were now suddenly exposed to insecurity and civil war, and eventually to corrupt despotisms.

A recent British television series, *The End of Empire*, included a program on the ending of white rule in Rhodesia and its conveyance to Robert Mugabe and his party. This was accomplished by the Conservative administration which took office in 1979. It dispatched to Rhodesia, as Governor, the Lord President of the Council, Lord Soames, with the mission of holding "free and fair" elections so as to produce a government acceptable to the majority. The program makes clear that the elections were neither free nor fair, but held in the shadow of thousands of armed men under Mugabe's control who, in contravention of a cease-fire agreement, did not assemble in camps set aside for them, but movely freely in the countryside and made sure that the correct results were obtained.

As the program also makes clear, this state of affairs was well known to the Governor and his officials. In a remarkable interview, Lord Soames discloses that some of his advisers wanted Mugabe's party banned for intimidation, but that he decided to do nothing. "I believed," Lord Soames says,

> he [Mugabe] was going to win anyhow and I used to say, you must remember this is Africa. This isn't little Puddleton-in-the-Marsh and they behave differently. And they think nothing of sticking tent poles up each other's whatnot you know and doing filthy, beastly things to each other. It does happen, I'm afraid, and it's a very wild thing, an election.

Quite so. On various occasions, from the Punjab in 1947 to Rhodesia in 1980, various tent poles were well and truly stuck up Asia's and Africa's whatnot, all with the best intentions, and with the benevolent assistance of the imperial power and its servants. Mountbatten's biography helps us to see how it was done.

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Religion and the Conservatives

Werner J. Dannhauser

I

MANY decry the need for labels in political discourse, but the labels themselves remain useful, helping us to describe reality. For example, the distinction between conservatives and liberals, between Right and Left, though overly schematic, remains significant. While it may well be true that most people in today's United States think of themselves as somewhere in the middle, politically speaking, that does not dispose of the problem. If we understand the center geometrically, as a point without dimensions, we must once more differentiate between left-centrists and right-centrists—in other words, between liberals and conservatives. The differences between them can be fuzzy but they are nevertheless real, and the two groupings certainly have a history, possibly even a nature.

As to history, the distinction between the Left and the Right appeared in the course of the French Revolution, and even today conservatives continue to harbor doubts about that revolution while liberals continue to view it with nostalgic enthusiasm. Other distinctions may be said to follow from this first crucial one: conservatives excel in seeing the dangers of Communism, but may be slow to understand fascism; liberals well understand the evils of fascism but can be curiously blind about Communism.

The most striking difference between liberals and conservatives, however, concerns religion. Conservatives tend to believe, liberals to doubt. To be sure, atheism is almost coeval with human thought. (The Bible tells us, after all, that "The fool hath said in his heart: 'There is no God.' ") One does well, however, to distinguish between atheism as a permanent possibility for individuals and atheism as a political force, even as Edmund Burke did in his *Thoughts on French Affairs*:

> Boldness formerly was not the character of Atheists as such. They were even of a character nearly the reverse; they were formerly like the old Epicureans, rather an unenterprising race. But of late they are grown active, designing, turbulent, and seditious.

To say that atheism became fashionable is to say that it was espoused by political movements, and these political movements originally belonged to the Left exclusively (it was not only enemies of the revolution, like Burke, who made this linkage, but also most of its friends, including Marx). In the 19th century, liberals and radicals came to view religion simply as superstition and to opt publicly for mankind's emancipation from it. They equated religion with fear and began to think of freedom from fear as a basic freedom. When Hobbes in Part IV of the *Leviathan* wrote of "the Kingdom of Darknesse" he was referring, overtly at least, primarily to the Catholic Church, but the phrase soon came to signify the whole realm of religion. The Left, marching under the banner bearing the magic word "Enlightenment," promised to bring relief from that darkness, and in so doing can be said to have forced the Right into a defensive posture. The Right now hoisted a banner bearing on it the word "Tradition," thereby engendering certain difficulties in the relationship between conservatives and religion which have not been resolved to this day.

II

CONSERVATIVES, as lovers of tradition, praise the old, that which is hallowed by time and usage; conservatism's detractors have a good point when they define a conservative as someone who is against anything being done for the first time. Conservatives identify the old with the good. But it is a lot easier to tell what is old than what is good.

Thus, again and again conservatives are embarrassed by the fact that tradition seems to preserve rather promiscuously (or at least incoherently), carrying down to us childish superstitions as well as the loftiest of themes. Transmitting so much, it also transmits much that is contradictory, and one is often unable to decide among rival traditions, at least not without leaving the plane of the traditional.

Nor does the difficulty end there. Conservatives soon discover that they are not the only ones seek-

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ing to justify themselves by an appeal to what is old. The partisans of the French Revolution, in judging and condemning the *ancien régime*, took their bearings by something even more ancient—they appealed to Nature. Taking Nature as their standard, they understood it as prior to human artifacts, the state of Nature in their view preceding the state of civil society, just as natural rights precede civil rights. As they understood it, Nature was the uncreated creative force.

But what then differentiated Nature from God? Contrary to what one might expect, conservatives have not excelled in answering this question, or even in dealing with the dilemmas it poses. Instead, they have resorted to various strategies, all more or less unsatisfactory. They have tried, for example, to distinguish between left-wing worshippers of Nature and right-wing worshippers of God. But whereas there may have been a moment when such a distinction generated insight, as time passed it served more to distort reality than to illuminate it. Eventually the Left abandoned Nature as a standard in favor of History, and one could then find about as many conservatives who were Nature-oriented as those who were God-oriented.

Even when it pointed to real divisions in the real world, the distinction proved unfortunate. After all, common sense tells us it is ludicrous to try to comprehend Nature as a left-wing phenomenon, even as it seems stupid, as well as blasphemous, to consider God a right-wing phenomenon. Where, then, does that leave conservatives?

Occasionally, they have argued for a synthesis of the part of our heritage stemming from Jerusalem —God—with the part stemming from Athens—Nature. But just as, on closer inspection, most syntheses turn out to be imperfect, with one or the other component clearly dominant, so too does the synthesis between Jerusalem and Athens. That is why so many great thinkers of the past have been able to use Jerusalem as a stick with which to beat Athens or Athens as a stick with which to beat Jerusalem.

Occasionally, conservatives have argued that the differences between Athens and Jerusalem may be real but they do not matter all that much for practical purposes. Yet it would be easy to show that it can matter quite a bit on a daily basis whether we take our bearings by a rational Nature or by a holy God. Moreover, it will not do to pretend that there is no difference between Nature's God and God's Nature. Jerusalem and Athens share an idea of transcendence, and what they have in common goes a long way, but it does not go all the way. And where one does find salutary agreement along the way, one is forced to note the absence of any firm and unique grounding on which conservatives might base their heritage. Thus, in the United States both liberals and conservatives admire the Declaration of Independence and claim it as their own, and it is by no means obvious that conservatives have a better claim in this respect than liberals.

In their general contests with liberals, conservatives do not always fare as well as they might. On the level of political practice one must remember that the label affixed to them by John Stuart Mill caught on and still haunts conservatives today: they became known as "the stupid party." On the level of political theory one must ponder the fact that in the last analysis Edmund Burke, the patron saint of conservatives, strikes one as less profound and less philosophical than his adversary, Jean Jacques Rousseau, the patron saint of the Left. In our time thoughtful conservatives have conceded as much.

One suspects that conservatives could improve their reputation as well as their perceptions by rethinking some of their views on religion.

III

SUCH RETHINKING might begin with an appreciation of the inevitable tensions between religion and politics. When the sea of faith recedes we may have to face nihilism, but it does not follow from this that harmony accompanies the sea of faith at high tide. Our nostalgic dreams of a harmonious past do violence to the past, encourage a general sappiness of mind, and detract from our ability to deal with the present and the future. Probity and prudence both dictate that as nearly as possible we remember history as it really was. We must, then, in thinking about religion, not fail to think about such things as the Crusades, the Inquisition, the machinations of popes against kings and vice versa, the ferocity of religious wars. We must heed Machiavelli's implicit linking of piety with pious cruelty.

Some who do heed the historical record argue that the basic tension is not between politics and religion generally, but between politics and Christianity in particular. To this end they dream wistfully of a civil religion that might replace Christian universalism. What they frequently have in mind is the ancient *polis* in which the gods who were worshipped were the gods of the city.

However, the most authoritative work on the religion, laws, and institutions of the city of antiquity does not altogether support these dreams of harmony. The great 19th-century French historian Fustel de Coulanges in his masterly study, *The Ancient City*, understands religion as "the constituent principle of the ancient family," and the interests of the family need not coincide with the interests of the *polis*. Dissension unto death can be present even when the family in question is the royal family. The quarrel between Antigone and Creon in Sophocles's *Antigone*—about whether obedience is owed to the gods or to the city—serves as the most enduring example of this truism.

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It may nevertheless be true that Christianity exacerbates the conflict between religion and politics. The historian of the Roman empire, Edward Gibbon, argued that Christianity destroyed "the greatness of Rome," leading to its decline and fall. Discussing the religious scene before the advent of Christianity, Gibbon writes, somewhat wistfully:

> The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosophers, as equally false; and by the magistrates as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.

It will be noted that in this passage of surpassing eloquence Gibbon distinguishes between the truth and the utility of religion. Conservatives owe it to themselves (and not only to themselves) to meditate on the complexities attending this distinction. Is religion true because it is useful? Is religion useful because it is true? Might religion be both false and useful?

IV

CONFRONTING these and kindred questions, one chances upon another area of inquiry that conservatives have not excelled in investigating. Sometimes instinctual conservatism too blithely asserts the usefulness of religion on the ground that it, and only it, makes men good. That assertion should crumble in the face of the first decent atheist—and many conservatives do in fact know many decent atheists, as well as indecent believers—but it has managed to survive all empirical evidence.

A common stratagem among conservatives consists of denying not the decency of the atheist but his atheism, contending that the decent may well be believers without knowing they believe, the proof of their belief being their decency. It scarcely needs to be said that such reasoning (if one can call it that) does not honor conservatives; nor does it attempt to understand atheists as they understand themselves.

A more estimable line of argument maintains that religion is useful not because it makes human beings good but because it makes them happy. This contention, too, runs into the difficulty posed by the happy atheist. Moreover, conservatives must be careful in pursuing this train of thought lest they uncover an altogether problematical—at least for them—distinction between being happy and being good.

Conservatives have a better case when they consider social and political life as a whole. From this vantage point there is no need to deny the existence either of non-believers who are virtuous or of those who attain serenity without belief in God. We now have enough historical experience with secularism to declare that the waning power of religion in modernity has not made people either happier or better, let alone happy and good.

As for history, those of the irreligious party who decry the monstrous deeds committed in the name of the Christian God must come to terms with the crimes committed by the godless in our century. The pious cruelty of the past has yielded to the impious cruelty of the present, and in this respect at least we moderns have outdone the ancients. Neither Inquisitor nor Crusader can match the crimes perpetrated by Hitler and Stalin within the living memory of many of us.

It may be objected that in the United States we need not beat our breasts about the crimes of Stalin and Hitler. After all, we did our share to defeat Nazi Germany and to contain the Soviet Union; if such a thing as a decency index for the measurement of societies could be constructed, we would not have to fear comparison with any Age of Faith. On the other hand, few would claim that we in today's United States have been especially successful in our pursuit of happiness.

Let us for a moment try to conceive of what is well-nigh inconceivable: the Soviet Union transforms itself overnight into a thoroughly benign regime, no longer threatening us, and our own economic system can suddenly deal flawlessly with poverty, business cycles, and the budget. In the unlikely event that these things came to pass, would we even then become happy? We would not.

In the last analysis, then, the argument for the utility of religion proves powerful. Our virtues surely need various kinds of buttressing and may even need cosmic support. It remains as true as ever that man does not live by bread alone, that we need spiritual sustenance, that we seem to be reverential creatures, in need of something above us, to which we can bow down in good grace. We may agree then that religion is useful because it fills a human need that nothing else has proved able to fill.

But once we have agreed about the utility of religion, we must still face the disquieting possibility that it might be useful even though it is false—and the even more disquieting possibility that it is useful *because* it is false. Plato's Socrates calls such salutary or nurturing myths noble lies; Nietzsche calls them holy lies.

Conservatives have no great trouble admitting that false religions may lead to true morality. It is not particularly disturbing to think of, say, a pagan tribe whose God of the Wind teaches the virtue of gratitude. The trouble comes when conservatives are asked to question the truth of their own religion.

V

IN SOME RESPECTS conservatives side with the philosophers. Exaggerating considerably, one may say that the *whole* tradition of philosophy is strong in

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praising the utility of religion and weak in claiming truth for it. One thinks of the medieval Arab philosophers Averroes and Avicenna, of Machiavelli's treatment of Moses, of Hobbes, Locke, and their successors. All these thinkers praise the usefulness of religion; but their tributes to its veracity betray a certain absence of conviction.

Even when philosophers think about God with all due seriousness, the God they are pondering is more likely to be some kind of a cosmic force or prime mover than the biblical God. How does one adore a God who resembles, say, electricity more than he does the source of all mercy and justice? How does one pray to such a God? Considerations of this sort led the French scientist and Christian religious philosopher Blaise Pascal, after a mystical experience in 1654 in which he beheld a vision of intense light, to the determination to devote his life to the "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of philosophers and scholars."

In addition to Pascal, there is also Martin Luther's argument with Erasmus on the subject of faith versus reason. Pascal and Luther together offer powerful testimony to the effect that philosophy tends toward non-belief. Moreover, they take to task a number of thinkers who cannot be excused on the ground that they had no opportunity to hear the good news from Jerusalem.

As citizens of the United States, we should pay special heed when men of the stature of Luther and Pascal bring the whole tradition of philosophy under the suspicion of atheism. Time has cast no veil over the origins of our country, which were decisively influenced by the teachings of that tradition. No wonder, then, that the pronouncements of the founders on religion sound more prudential than enthusiastic. Here is George Washington, for example, in his Farewell Address:

> Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. . . . Let it simply be asked where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation *desert* the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure—reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

Washington here—and elsewhere—says much more about the utility of religion than about its truth, and most of the other leaders of our revolution echo him in this respect. In private they may well have speculated more boldly than in public about the possibility of a self-subsistent morality, but they appreciated the role of religion in producing civility. They surely opposed a frontal assault on the fund of faith bequeathed to them by puritanism, though in hindsight we may wonder whether they were sufficiently concerned about its depletion.

VI

WRITING in the middle decades of the 19th century, Tocqueville found America's fund of faith to be in sound condition. His testimony counts for a great deal among conservatives, but liberals too claim Tocqueville for their side. As it happens, *Democracy in America* contains more than enough insights to go around, but in this case conservatives are probably right in thinking Tocqueville one of their own. He reassures them by writing of affinities between religion and democracy, by demonstrating the role religion plays in shoring up the two great principles of liberty and equality, and above all by showing that the separation of church and state can be beneficial to both.

Yet Tocqueville too causes us to wonder about the strength of his religious belief. We do not quite know what he means by Providence, for example, and we cannot help noticing that in crucial passages he too emphasizes not the truth of religion but its usefulness.

But the 19th century's most portentous statement about religion comes from Tocqueville's younger contemporary, Nietzsche, who in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* announced to the world that "God is dead."

The primary meaning of that statement is that religion has lost its power over human life, its social force. Thus a proof of God's existence would not refute Nietzsche, and a proof of God's nonexistence would not corroborate him. What Nietzsche meant to teach us was that the *utility* of religion was at an end because the belief in its truth was at an end.

A variety of forces had conspired to produce a decisive turning point in human affairs, according to Nietzsche. The "higher criticism" of the Bible initiated by Spinoza had made the acceptance of revelation immeasurably more difficult. Christianity had developed a conscience so strict and tender that it turned on Christianity itself. Modern science had painted a persuasive picture of a chaotic universe. Not only was God dead; *all gods* were dead, all transcendent truths and standards.

One does not refute Nietzsche's pronouncement by pointing to the persistence of belief; Nietzsche never doubted that. Nor is one done with him if one can show that belief is not only widespread but pervasive. In Gallup polls, well over 90 percent of all Americans profess a belief in God, but those results say nothing about the depth of the belief Americans profess.

In our century, many a celebration of religious revival has turned out to be premature as the revival in question has turned out to be quite shallow. In today's America, we are more likely to be surprised by a prominent man's religious

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fervor than by his atheism. And believers are more likely than in the past to keep their belief compartmentalized, so as to assure us that for the most part they are just like everybody else. In other words, unbelief sets the tone for belief.

VII

Too many conservatives have failed to come to terms with Nietzsche's thought, dismissing it as an embarrassing attempt to outflank them on the Right. But the challenge he represents will not go away.

Nietzsche went far beyond Burke, who held out the hope of a time when atheism might cease to be fashionable. Nietzsche postulated an irreversible loss of naiveté in Western civilization. To put the matter crudely, he argued that the cat of atheism was out of the bag. The meanest capacities could now learn that religion was a myth, and when a myth is exposed for what it is, it can no longer serve to provide a unified horizon.

Too many conservatives whose own belief is weak or nonexistent, who will privately admit that religion is "for the troops," continue to try to teach the catechism to those troops, forgetting that the latter have by now been thoroughly exposed to the Enlightenment and its lessons.

One can also say that too many conservatives expose their own superficiality when they pretend that the truth of religion does not matter much because man is simply a religious animal with religious needs. If God is dead, or if He never existed, and man is nevertheless a religious animal, we must face the abysmal truth that man is so structured that reality can offer no fulfillment of his highest hopes or deepest yearnings. Man then is the animal that must hallucinate to be happy. But at this point conservatism ends and nihilism begins. If man is the hallucinating animal, the world is a chaos. But conservatism's fundamental assertion has always been that human order is part of a cosmic order.

Psychologists of the phenomenological or existentialist persuasion might accuse conservatives of practicing denial when it comes to Nietzsche's thought, and they would have a point. It would probably be more precise to say that conservatives simply think of religion as their own and therefore recoil from any perceived threat to it. They may not appreciate Nietzsche properly but they understand correctly his call for a candid atheism. Nietzsche asks them to surrender something near and dear to them, so they turn away.

The same proprietary interest in religion makes conservatives reluctant to admit that today religion is very often on the other side politically. Leaving aside the thorny question of whether the current upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism counts as left- or right-wing, there is the Anglican Church in Great Britain, which is in many respects to the Left of the conservatives, and Latin America's liberation theology, with its avowed Marxist tendencies. As for the United States, it is not just the Moral Majority that is fueled by religious enthusiasm, but also the efforts of Jesse Jackson.

Instead of thinking in terms of Right and Left when it comes to religion, perhaps we should try to distinguish between traditional religious movements and apocalyptic ones or, as Irving Kristol puts it, between orthodoxy and gnosticism. But then we must wonder whether conservatism has assessed gnosticism any more profoundly than it has addressed the much larger question of the truth, as distinguished from the utility, of religion. Until conservatives grapple with that larger question, their defense of religion will continue to be open to challenge, and the genuine affinity they have for religious belief will remain without a proper intellectual foundation.

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"Yours Sincerely, Sinclair Levy"

Barry Gross

My best friend from high school is now a writer, famous enough to be the subject of a forthcoming study. What did you read, his biographer asks me, back then in the 50's, back there in the Bronx?

We read everything, but especially American fiction. Ours was probably the last high-school class taught to believe that there was an American literary tradition to inherit, a literal bloodline to join; the last class taught to believe in cultural continuity, to admire and respect literary elders. Ours was also probably the last class taught to believe that there was no higher calling than art: those of us not so blessed—and it *was* a matter of being blessed—as to be able to produce it, those of us who could not, alas, be novelists, could at least spend our lives teaching literature—preaching it, really. We could be critics, not in the sense of scourges or excoriators but in the sense of explicators, transmitters, celebrators, champions.

Some of our reading was work. Anything written before 1900 was, by definition, work. Anything written after 1900 by Henry James, Edith Wharton, William Dean Howells, or Theodore Dreiser was also work. Anything written in or about the 1930's—one could almost touch the heaviness, smell the grayness—was work: the depression was, after all, depressing, and we were fifteen. Fifteen, we loved the 20's. Possibly because ours too was a postwar decade with a Republican President, possibly because ours too was an affluent time, or possibly just because of all those wonderful novels, the 20's weren't work, but love.

But there was a problem for us in the Class of '55 at the Bronx High School of Science: we were Jewish. The problem was not that there were few Jewish novels from the 20's for us to read; that was no surprise. Better than anyone else could know, we, the first- and second-generation American born, knew that our parents and grandparents had been far too busy in the 20's moving from the Lower East Side to the Bronx and Brooklyn where we were born to have written novels. Besides, we would correct that imbalance, teach the novel or write our own, and nothing in our education, formal or informal, ever suggested to us that in wanting to concentrate on literature we were being presumptuous, that maybe English was a field into which we should fear—or, at least, hesitate—to tread. No one pointed out to us that even in the 50's at Columbia there was one Lionel Trilling and at Johns Hopkins one Earl Wasserman and at Cornell one M.H. Abrams and at Harvard one Harry Levin and that all the way out there in Montana—Montana! —there was one Leslie Fiedler. Nor was the problem that the American literature we loved was *Judenrein*. The problem was that it wasn't, that when Jews did appear in the novels of the 20's they were almost always, though in varying degrees, unpleasant.

For a Jewish reader a Jewish character, however minor, looms absurdly large; a casual anti-Semitic slur, however easy and reasonable to dismiss as a mere innocuous social reflex, reverberates for pages and pages. It may not be right or fair but it is unavoidable. Anyone who identifies himself as a member of a group that is or has been slighted knows that the wary and guarded eye notices the telltale word—"Jew," "Negro," whatever—half a page away and that a warning bell, persistent and insistent, immediately goes off. So we had a problem, we Jewish youngsters who so much loved the American writers of the 20's (we were also, incidentally, the last class taught that writers were to be loved, not just as artists but as people, that writers, because they did what they did, were a race apart, that good writers were good people and great writers were great people). The problem—their Jewish problem but our American problem—threatened to spoil everything.

Did F. Scott Fitzgerald, our darling, have to notice, as narrator of *The Beautiful and Damned*, "two young Jewish men talking in loud voices and craning their necks here and there in fatuous supercilious glances"? Did Anthony Patch in the same novel have to notice "a dozen Jewish names on a line of stores [and] in the door of each . . . a dark little man watching the passers with intent eyes—eyes gleaming with suspicion, with pride, with clarity, with cupidity, with comprehension. New York—[Anthony] could not dissociate it . . . from the slow, upward creep of this people—the little stores, growing, expanding, consolidating, moving, watched over with hawk's eyes and a bee's attention to detail—they slathered out on all sides"? Did Joseph Bloeckman, Anthony's rival in love, have to be a "stoutening, ruddy Jew" whose nostrils are "overwide" and who speaks "with a little too evident assurance"? Did he have to be "overdressed," did he have to affect an "inappropriate facetiousness . . . in ties"? Did his hands have to advertise themselves with too many "heavy rings" and "the raw glow of a manicure"?

And then there was Meyer Wolfsheim in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, a character whom Edith Wharton absolutely adored as that "*perfect* Jew." Perhaps Fitzgerald should not be blamed for Whar-

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ton's Jewish problem—see, for insance, her "pushy, little Jew" Rosedale in *The House of Mirth*—but what about the Jewish problem of his narrator, Nick Carraway? It is not enough for Nick to describe Wolfsheim as "a small, flat-nosed Jew [with] two fine growths of hair . . . luxuriat[ing] in either nostril"; he goes on to notice that Wolfsheim "covered Gatsby with his expressive nose," "flashed" his nose "indignantly," "turned his nostrils . . . to me in an interested way"; he has Wolfsheim's "tragic nose . . . trembling."

WHAT happened to otherwise fine writers when they had to describe a Jewish face? What was Willa Cather thinking of when she came to portray Louis Marsellus in *The Professor's House*?

> Louie's eyes were vividly blue, like hot sapphires, but the rest of his face had little color—he was a rather mackerel-tinted man. Only his eyes, and his quick, impetuous movements, gave out the zest for life with which he was always bubbling. There was nothing Semitic about his countenance except for his nose—that took the lead. It was not at all an unpleasing feature, but it grew out of his face with masterful strength, well-rooted, like a vigorous oak-tree growing out of a hillside.

And Willa Cather rather liked her Louie! At least she liked him more than does Professor St. Peter, to whom Louie's "zest for life" too often results in "heedless enthusiasm that made him often say untactful things" and a tendency to "pick up a dinner party and walk off with it." Professor St. Peter, Cather writes, had "cultivated [Louie] as a stranger in town, because he was unusual and exotic, but without in the least wishing to adopt anyone so foreign into the family circle." As the professor tells his wife, "One likes the florid style or one doesn't"—the Professor doesn't. When his daughter marries this Jew, the professor remarks how "both she and her mother had changed . . . and hardened [and] Louis . . . had done the damage."

JOHN DOS PASSOS's Jews in *Three Soldiers* are even less attractive: Eisenstein, "a little man of thirty with an ash-colored face and a shiny Jewish nose" whose "sallow face" contracts into a "curious spasm" when he speaks in his "feeble, squeaky, . . . nasal voice"; Stern, who also has "a sallow face" and "curious lips for a Jew."

In *Manhattan Transfer* the Jew most in evidence is the slimy and sinister Broadway producer Harry Goldweiser, a source of obvious physical discomfort to Dos Passos: "The curve of Harry Goldweiser's nose merges directly into the curve of his bald forehead, his big rump bulges over the edges of a triangular gilt stool." He is even more repulsive to Ellen, who feels his "eyes measur[ing] her face like antennae," who "feels his words press against her body, nudge in the hollows where her dress clings; she can hardly breathe for fear of listening to him. . . . She feels helpless, caught like a fly in his sticky trickling sentences. . . . His eyes are full of furtive spiderlike industry weaving a warm sweet choking net about her face and neck." It is not surprising, therefore—painful, but not surprising—that when Ellen needs an abortion she visits—who else?—Dr. Abrams, "a short broad man with a face like a rat. . . . Short doll-hands the color of the flesh of a mushroom hang at his sides. He hunches his shoulders in a bow. . . . He heaves a hissing sigh and . . . looks in her eyes with black steel eyes like gimlets."

IN Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* the American newspaperman Jake Barnes is almost as obsessed with Robert Cohn's nose as Nick Carraway is with Meyer Wolfsheim's. The fact that Cohn had gotten "his nose permanently flattened" in a match at Princeton, Jake says, "gave him a certain satisfaction of some strange sort, and it certainly improved his nose. . . ." Unlike Fitzgerald's Wolfsheim, however, Cohn—never Robert, by the way, but always Cohn or Robert Cohn—is a major character. Hemingway never lets the reader forget that Cohn is a Jew, not an unattractive character who happens to be a Jew but a character who is unattractive because he is a Jew. Jake derides Cohn's "hard, Jewish, stubborn streak," Cohn's way of gazing at the beautiful Lady Brett Ashley "as his compatriot must have looked when he saw the promised land, . . . that look of eager, deserving expectation," Cohn's "air of superior knowledge" (so "superior and Jewish," Jake's friend Bill Gorton adds). Mike Campbell, the main anti-Semite in the novel, speaks for them all when he berates Cohn: "Do you think you amount to something, Cohn? Go away. Go away, for God's sake. Take that sad Jewish face away."

It is Cohn's "air of superior knowledge" that stimulates Bill's outrageous overreaction to Cohn's gaffe at a bullfight. It is bad enough that Cohn asks if one can bet on a bullfight—"You don't need any economic interest" is Jake's barely veiled rejoinder. But when Cohn says he is "afraid [he] may be bored," Bill—decent, even-tempered Bill—positively explodes: "He's got this Jewish superiority so strong that he thinks the only emotion he'll get out of the fight will be being bored. . . . That kike!"

LATER, when we learned to read more carefully and to listen more critically, there were gradations to be perceived. Some of these writers' Jewish problems did not seem nearly so severe; Willa Cather's, at least in *The Professor's House*, or Fitzgerald's (Bloeckman in *The Beautiful and Damned* is much more appealing than the apparent hero Anthony Patch and then, of course, there's Monroe Stahr in *The Last Tycoon*). But some were as severe as they first seemed (Dos Passos's), and some (Hemingway's) were even worse than our first reading suggested. That first time around, though, they all caused pain and made us wonder where *we* were in the American literary tradition.

But then there was also Sinclair Lewis, and not just minor Lewis but the Lewis of his three major novels—*Main Street*, *Babbitt*, and *Arrowsmith*.

When the word "Jew" leaped off the page in *Main Street* it did so for clear and unequivocal reasons. In that novel Jews are part of the wide, cosmopolitan world, the world that is not Gopher Prairie: Minneapolis, with its "liquor warehouses, Hebraic clothing shops,

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and lodging houses"; Chicago, where Carol Kennicott is exposed to "symphonies and violin recitals and chamber music, . . . theater and classical dancing, [and] a certified Studio Party, with beer, cigarettes, bobbed hair, and a Russian Jewess who sang the *Internationale*"; and New York, where Carol's sociology instructor "had lived among poets and socialists and Jews."

As for Gopher Prairie's own attitudes toward Jews, they are symptomatic of the two small-town viruses —provincialism and prejudice. Gopher Prairie parties are provincial, Lewis shows us, because the entertainment consists of "stunts: one Jewish, one Irish, one juvenile." Will Kennicott's aunt and uncle are ridiculous because they believe that "Jews are . . . always peddlers or pantsmakers," and Percy Bresnahan is revealed as a bigot when he accuses Carol of "talking like a New York Jew" for expressing an interest in the Bolshevik revolution.

The world of Zenith in *Babbitt* is wider and larger than the world of Gopher Prairie in *Main Street*. Zenith has Jews as members of and actors in its social landscape. Of four union officials, "one resembled a testy and prosperous grocer, one a Yankee carpenter, one a soda-clerk, and one a Russian Jewish actor [who] quoted Kautsky, Gene Debs, and Abraham Lincoln." One of the "boys" in Babbitt's lunch circle at the Zenith Athletic Club is Sidney Finkelstein, the ladies'-ready-to-wear buyer at the local department store, who is no better and no worse than Babbitt or any of his other bourgeois and materialistic friends, identical even in his prejudices, as his own thoughtless and innocuous anti-Semitism makes clear:

> I always say—and believe me, I base it on a pretty fairly extensive mercantile experience—the best is the cheapest in the long run. Of course if a fellow wants to be a Jew about it, he can get cheap junk, but in the long run, the cheapest thing is the best you can get! Now you take here just the other day: I got a new top for my old boat and some upholstery, and I paid out a hundred and twenty-six fifty, and of course a lot of fellows would say that was too much—Lord, if the Old Folks —they live in one of these hick towns up-state and they simply can't get into the way a city fellow's mind works, and then, of course, they're Jews, and they'd lie right down and die if they knew Sid had anted up a hundred and twenty-six bones.

But above all, in *Arrowsmith*, there is Max Gottlieb, who is if not the hero of the novel then certainly the novel's—and the hero's—conscience. No major American writer had given a Jew such a positive prominent place in a novel before, and no non-Jewish one has since, except for Fitzgerald in *The Last Tycoon*. The difference, however, is instructive: Monroe Stahr is Jewish only because Fitzgerald tells us he is—because Irving Thalberg, the real-life source he is modeled on, was—but Fitzgerald makes no real attempt to connect Stahr's greatness with his Jewishness. Lewis, by contrast, never lets us forget that Gottlieb is Jewish—it is his dominant and persistent identity. Moreover, Gottlieb is not a great man who happens to be a Jew; he is a great man because he is a Jew.

He is also a victim of anti-Semitism. "Max Gottlieb was a German Jew" is how Lewis introduces him to us. He left Germany because he was "often . . . infuriated by discrimination against Jews." He comes to the United States because he believes that "America . . . could never become . . . anti-Semitic." At his first post in America, however, "no one . . . regarded him as other than a cranky Jew." At the University of Winnemac, where Martin Arrowsmith becomes his student and disciple, he is "hated by his colleagues, who were respectful to his face, uncomfortable in feeling his ironic power, but privily joyous to call him Mephisto, Diabolist, Killjoy, Pessimist, Destructive Critic, Flippant Cynic, Scientific Bounder Lacking in Dignity and Seriousness, Intellectual Snob, Pacifist, Anarchist, Atheist, Jew." At Hunzicker's Pharmaceutical Company "the young technical experts resented his jolly thrusts at their commercialism, his mathematical enthusiasms, . . . viewed him as an old bore, muttered of him as a Jew." At the McGurk Institute he is regarded, once war breaks out, "not as the great and impersonal immunologist but as a suspect German Jew."

Lewis's understanding of the major impulse behind anti-Semitism and how it expresses itself is, I think, remarkable. He recognizes that anti-Semites think and use the word "Jew" not just as the last item in a list of epithets, or as one epithet out of many, but as a comprehensive category which includes and subsumes everything else of which someone is considered "guilty," that to call someone a "Jew" in that particular tone of voice is to draw up, in just three letters, a whole bill of particulars, an arraignment.

But if Gottlieb makes people uncomfortable because of his questioning, his independence, his intellectuality, and his skepticism, these are precisely the strengths for which Martin Arrowsmith so passionately loves him. They constitute "Max Gottlieb's truth." Martin "preaches to himself, as Max Gottlieb had once preached to him, the loyalty of dissent, the faith of being very doubtful, the gospel of not believing gospels, the wisdom of admitting the probable ignorance of one's self and of everybody else." These comprise the famous "prayer of the scientist" which Martin utters so devoutly:

> God give me unclouded eyes and freedom from haste. God give me a quiet and relentless anger against all pretense and all pretentious work and all work left slack and unfinished. God give me a restlessness whereby I may neither sleep nor accept praise till my observed results equal my calculated results or in pious glee I discover and assault my error. God give me strength not to trust to God!

Max Gottlieb is not just the flip side of the Robert Cohn coin, a Jew who really is superior and who uses his superiority benignly. Lewis makes him poignantly, even pathetically, human, and nowhere more so than in his longing for mundane companionship and ordinary love. As a Jew among suspicious or jealous Gentiles he has never had a colleague "to whom he could talk without suspicion or caution." He finds no solace in his Gentile wife, "thick and slow-moving and mute

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—at sixty she had not learned to speak easy English and her German was of the small-town bourgeois who pay their debts and overeat and grow red." His son "is a wild thing and a distress," who lets his Gentile classmates believe "that he was from pure and probably noble German stock" and not of the "Jewish blood" about which Gottlieb is "alternately proud and amiably sardonic." Martin Arrowsmith learns too late how profoundly Max Gottlieb longs for him, how deeply he yearns for Martin to be colleague, companion, son. In short, Max Gottlieb is a rounded and fully imagined human being.

WHEN Mark Schorer's biography of Lewis came out several years later, we discovered that the positive feelings toward Jews and the detestation of anti-Semitism which we had detected in *Main Street* and *Babbitt* and *Arrowsmith* were not just literary devices or methods of characterization but were intrinsic to Lewis. Can one imagine Dos Passos addressing, as Lewis did, the Sunday Afternoon Club of the First Presbyterian Church of Evanston, Illinois and using the occasion to attack the anti-Semitism of Henry Ford? Can one imagine Hemingway refusing—as Lewis did—to stay at the best hotel in Bermuda because it was known to discriminate against Jews? Can one imagine Fitzgerald replying to a letter from the German producer who held the European rights to his work as Lewis did? Told that he would have to provide evidence of Aryan descent if the Reich Chamber theater was to allow a production of *Dodsworth*, Lewis answered, "Who knows what ancestors [I] may have had in the last few hundred years? [I] really [am] as ignorant of them as even Hitler of his. In answering please use [my] proper legal name," and he signed the letter, "Yours Sincerely, Sinclair Levy."

But we didn't know about that in high school. All we knew was what we read in *Main Street* and *Babbitt* and *Arrowsmith*: not a single indignant, trembling, tragic, hairy-nostriled, tree-trunk of a nose; no loud or boasting, florid or affected, squeaky or nasal voices; no mackerel-tinted, mushroom-colored, sallow skin; no suspicious hawk's eyes; no hissing or slathering or trickling or choking; no producers or parvenus; no gangsters; no abortionists; no kikes. Just Jews, and not all of them wonderful—after all, how many Max Gottliebs can any group produce? "Normal" Jews, even mediocre and compromised Jews—Sidney Finkelstein in *Babbitt*, the "polite" and "industrious" Dr. Aaron Shultheis in *Arrowsmith* "who had been born to a synagogue in Russia but who was now the most zealous high-church Episcopalian in Yonkers."

Not to have been included at all in Sinclair Lewis's America would have been for us disastrous, for he was the most inclusive, the most comprehensive, and, despite his renown as a satirist, the most generous of American novelists. But to see ourselves included in such multiple and various ways, when everywhere else we looked in the novels of the 20's we saw Jews who were aberrations of one sort or another; to find Jewish marginality treated as a source of ethical and intellectual strength, when everywhere else we looked in the novels of the 20's it was treated as a source of gaucherie and social-climbing; to come across portrayals of anti-Semitism aimed at ridiculing the anti-Semite, when everywhere else we looked in the novels of the 20's the object of anti-Semitism was to ridicule the Jew—beholding all this, we felt that Lewis legitimized us, naturalized us, conferred upon us (to borrow an evocative phrase of Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway) the freedom of the neighborhood.

Confessions of an Ex-Translator

Jacob Sloan

I MEAN "confessions" here in none of the word's more odious senses, criminal or spiritual. Translation is no guilty act to be forgiven at the confessional box. Nor do I labor under the compulsion to offer an *Apologia pro vita mea*, a justification before God and man of my life as translator. From childhood, in all my waking moments I have taken delight in an intense preoccupation: translating not mere words but worlds of experience—and the reality behind that experience—into my own language, world, experience. I have conceived translation between languages to be an extension of the larger preoccupation many of us share under another name, "the search for knowledge."

My first recollection of translating comes from a very early age, before I could either read or write. This is hard to believe. But I do have a hazy memory of the event, which my mother used to describe with pardonable love and pride. It seems that her younger son, when only four, would after dinner

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sprawl out under the kitchen table, where he would carefully fill in the empty boxes in the evening newspaper's crossword puzzle.

A far cry from the lyrical accomplishment of the King James, or of the seventy scholars who miraculously agreed on a uniform Septuagint? Not really. One is reminded of the apparently frivolous but really quite serious remark passed offhand by Sholem Aleichem. When pressed by a persistent interviewer to explain *why* he wrote, the great humorist finally confided: "Because I can't stand the sight of blank paper."

All of us for whom language is terribly important, at whatever age, are constantly filling in the blank boxes of our *tabula rasa*, scribbling over the empty pages of knowledge. We are continually arranging and rearranging intellectual and emotional furniture in the otherwise empty rooms of the world we were born into, giving significant form to meaningless space.

So my mother was not far wrong when she interpreted my childish scribblings as a first, hopeful sign of growing intellectual curiosity. Nor is it stretching the word "translation" to the snapping point to call this pencil work an index at an elementary level of the same symbol-making that the grown translator performs with the aid of dictionary, thesaurus, concordance —and intuition.

My second experience at translation occurred some ten years later, in high school. There is no question that *this* was translation, of the formal type. But the circumstances surrounding it, the shape it took, what the event meant in the development of my own consciousness—these seem to me now far more important than the bare fact that at the age of fourteen I first entered the translation fraternity.

We were studying the *Aeneid*. I was strongly affected by Virgil's moving aside. He has just finished describing Dido's self-immolation after Aeneas's betrayal, and goes on to comment: *Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.* ("There are tears for mortality, and human woes touch the human heart.")

I did not know that this is one of the most quoted lines in Latin literature. It came to me completely first-hand, out of the blue, and I was thoroughly shaken. For days I went around repeating it. Finally, I exorcised the spell in a very strange way; I translated Macbeth's soliloquy of desperate resignation into a schoolboy approximation of Virgil's classical Latin. "Out, out, brief candle" became *"fuge fuge candela brevis."*

I had no idea at the time that I had imposed on myself, for reasons still somewhat indistinct to me now, an exercise at whose performance generations of Oxbridge students had writhed; the Miltons and Johnsons who performed prodigies of Latin versification were, obviously, exceptional even in an age of university Latinists.

No, I was making no claim to Latin scholarship. What I think I was trying to do was to draw connections. These connections were not only between two languages, between two different ages and societies in the past—but also between them and my own present.

I was trying to connect Virgil's Augustan age with Shakespeare's Elizabethan age, and (implicitly) with my own New Deal period. I did not know at the time that both Virgil and Shakespeare had engaged in the same enterprise as I had. Virgil had related the mythical fall of Troy and the establishment of Rome, the subject of the *Aeneid*, to the imperial city of Rome where he himself lived and wrote. And Shakespeare had inferred a connection between the primitive witchery and violent ambition played out on Scottish heaths in *Macbeth* and the violence, ambitions, witcheries of renaissance London. But I did sense a relationship between the traditional European humanism that both Virgil and Shakespeare represented for me and New York of the depression period where all that was mythical, and classic, and divinely compassionate, and tragic on a grand scale seemed irrelevant to so many of my friends, caught up in the grayness and tedium of their streets and lives.

That *fuge fuge candela brevis* followed me for thirty years. In translation after translation, of poems, and plays, and stories, and novels, and even of journalism, I kept looking for equivalences and valences, mutations and permutations, new vessels for old wine, transpositions of all kinds.

Thus I sought in my translations to convert Aramaic prayers of the time of Jesus into Buberian I-Thou dialogues, encounters between God and man. Philosophic rhapsodies from the 14th-century Golden Age of Spain I tried to match with pre-Raphaelite elegance, and self-mocking Central European sentimentality with Audenesque ironic slang. I viewed Emmanuel Ringelblum's dispassionate eyewitness record of the Final Solution in the Warsaw ghetto through a Dos Passos living-history camera eye. And I even ventured, in a translator's preface to *Satan in Goray*, to refer that account of a satanic, apocalyptic mass hysterical movement to the Marxist messianism of our own times.

Whatever I translated became part of my own thinking and feeling, not only while I was working on it, but before and after as well. I found myself repeating words, phrases, lines, developing metaphors, hints, adapting them to my own writing. To this day I am possessed by the material I worked with. For a week last year, I kept repeating to myself during long walks my rendition of some lines from a wistful Yiddish poem by Moishe Leib Halpern: "Walk around all day and dream/that you've a villa by the sea./And your wife plays the piano/and bears with you, tenderly."

I HAVE never regretted those years of translation, and do not regret them now. But there came a time when I stopped translating, and I do not regret that either.

Something that the gifted Maurice Samuel once said to me is apropos. Samuel's work was a model of the kind of "transcreation," rather than more literal translation, that Ezra Pound, working with Chinese originals, Robert Lowell (with French), and P. Lal (with Sanskrit) so brilliantly practiced. And yet Samuel, the author of the wonderful *World of Sholom Aleichem*, a model of grace and understanding, confided to me wearily one afternoon that he was

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"tired of chewing someone else's cud."

Certainly, ego is involved. A frustration that is often embittering halts many translators, particularly those who, like the writer and Kafka translator Edwin Muir, do not wish to wake up one morning and discover that they are writers *manqués*, and be tempted to blame their failure not on their own limited powers but on a fancied self-sacrifice on other authors' altars.

But I do not feel that way about myself and my own writing. I still believe that I got from translation as much as, if not more than, I gave to it. My own work has been enriched, not impoverished, by the years of translation.

No, for clues to the reason why I have stopped translating I must turn elsewhere. I think that what has happened is that my attitude has changed not merely to language but to the reality behind language as well—and that this change is part of a maturation, a late stage in the development I share with all humanity. It has something to do with Macaulay's apt epigram: "Judgment ripens, imagination decays." In time, he means.

Now, the ideal translator achieves an equilibrium between the forces of imagination and judgment, freedom and conformity, the spirit and the letter of the word. When the equilibrium becomes impossible for him, he can no longer do his balancing act between cultures. The word juggler drops the balls; the trapeze artist misses connection with the swinging ropes of meaning.

That, I suspect, is what has happened to me as a translator—as it does to other translators. We become relatively stronger on the judgment side, weaker on the imagination side. Our poetry becomes prosaic, our prose abstract.

In the end, we simply lose interest in the balancing act. Instead, we tend to assume the critic's role. This role has never to my mind been better described than by Franz Kafka, as quoted in Gustav Jannouch's *Conversations with Kafka*. The young author asked Kafka whether it was not true that his work was a critique of modern society. Oh no, Kafka responded, he could never be a critic. He could not, he said, put himself in the place of a work of art, then put himself back in his own place—and then precisely measure the distance between the two positions.

The work of criticism is completely opposed to that of translation. The translator, stating one thing in terms of another, seeks to erase the distance between them. The critic, as Kafka with his usual penetration perceived, constantly measures distances between the observer and the thing observed, pointing to discrepancies rather than identities.

WHAT happens to the translator is that, after years of searching for similarities and parallels, he comes to the point where these fall, where uniqueness alone stands: the unbridgeable distance between languages, cultures, views of reality.

The translator becomes persuaded that no view of reality can be translated into any other terms than its own. This persuasion coincides with a diminution of the forces of imagination, a growing incapacity to suspend disbelief, an insistence on the hard fact of things as they are—obdurate, immalleable reality.

Following Dante's image, in our middle years we reach that place where the thicket is for the first time realized as what it truly is. It is the same thicket through which we have spent our youth and early maturity happily slashing our way. Now we see that it is essentially impenetrable—and is meant to be so.

So, by abandoning translating, I have given up a far more important thing than turning words from a language I know fairly well into my native language, which I know very well. I have given up the pretense that I can transfer the view of reality of one language into another. But, more important, I am also admitting that language cannot convey—or even communicate—ultimate reality.

I recently read about a precocious three-year-old child who at the time of the Bolshevik revolution was living in Moscow. Her father was a prominent member of the Socialist Revolutionary party, many of whose leaders had been jailed by the Cheka, the Bolshevik secret police. Indignantly, the little girl picked up the telephone to tell the Cheka to let Papa's friends go.

But two things went wrong. The child knew only her own telephone number; and that number she pronounced faultily: *dva-dvadtzat-tri* (223) came out: *da-ta-ta-i*. One surmises a third mishap which the source I read does not mention. Since the child was calling her own number, she must have received a busy signal.

This strikes me as a useful metaphor both for translation and for the relations between human beings and the powers-that-be—or, in religious terms, God. In our communications with Him, we can only stammer. (Think of the elementary symbols which Carl Sagan broadcasts to superior intelligent life in outer space!) Since we state only our own view of reality, our own number, the only one we know, we continually address ourselves. We receive no answer, because our line is always busy—declaring ourselves.

This is a bitter pill to have to swallow. But once we have gotten it down, the effects are exhilarating. I have always considered myself a religious skeptic. But with this admission that language is chaff flung to the winds of reality, I find that I have joined my skepticism to the essential religious faith of my people. As Gershom Scholem has put it in speaking of Jewish mysticism:

> In its classical form, religion signifies the creation of a vast abyss, conceived as absolute, between God, the infinite and transcendental Being, and Man, the finite creature. . . . The great monotheistic religions live and unfold in the ever-present consciousness of this bipolarity, of the existence of an abyss which can never be bridged.

Following the lead of my forefathers, I can throw in my poor hand and say to the God on the other side of the table, who is the ultimate and unknowable reality: I pass! You win!

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Gaddis Recognized

Carol Iannone

To millions it may have seemed the promised land, but to certain of its native sons, post-World War II America had gained the whole world only to lose its soul. Such, at any rate, was the view that impelled the evolution of "metafiction" in the postwar years—a fiction whose form and content were meant to mirror, in an ironic way, the extravaganza of hype, fraud, and mounting materialism that the United States, its critics said, had finally been revealed to be. The writers of "metafiction" now include such near-venerable men of letters as John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, and, perhaps less well known, William Gaddis, who in hindsight can be seen as a pioneer of the form.

Gaddis's *The Recognitions* (1955),* a thousand-page "meta-novel" about forgery, religion, art, and the quest for meaning in the contemporary wasteland, brought the principles of late literary modernism to bear upon the American novel. Lacking an authoritative narrative voice and the usual signs of fictional organization, full of complex mythological, literary, religious, historical, and occult allusions, *The Recognitions* uses and parodies many sources, among them T.S. Eliot (especially "The Waste Land"), Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, Goethe's *Faust*, and a 3rd-century Christian work, *Recognitions of Clement*.

The Recognitions was widely reviewed—and widely damned. In what a Gaddis supporter has since called "one of American criticism's weakest hours," all but a few of *The Recognitions*' first reviews—there were fifty-five of them—ranged from cool dismissal to sputtering outrage that focused especially on the novel's bulk and complicated technique. But the book gradually began to gain a reputation as an underground classic, prompting paperback editions in 1962, 1970, and 1974. Favorable revaluations by John W. Aldridge, Tony Tanner, and David Madden appeared, and Anthony West predicted that *The Recognitions* would "one day take a place in classic American literature." Academic critics, who soon enough rallied to the Gaddis banner, have indeed maintained that *The Recognitions* is an American masterpiece on a par with *Moby-Dick*.

A year after the first reissue of *The Recognitions*, in 1963, Gaddis was awarded a grant from the National Institute of Arts and Letters and garnered high praise from the patriarch of the literary mainstream, Malcolm Cowley. Gaddis soon accumulated other prestigious awards, and as the 60's progressed he began to enjoy as well the peculiar literary fame of the neglected writer; a 1968 *Book World* feature cited him as one of "ten neglected American writers who deserve to be better known."

And the times they were a-changin'. By 1975, the year of Gaddis's second novel, *JR*,† a corrosive diatribe against capitalist corruption told in 700 pages of near-hysterical running dialogue, Gaddis's voice fell on eagerly receptive ears. *JR* was awarded the coveted National Book Award—in part, as has been suggested even by Gaddis's admirers, because a lot of critics felt obligated to undo past damages. In 1982, in a crowning touch of reparation, Gaddis was chosen as a recipient of a five-year "genius" grant from the MacArthur Foundation.

Gaddis's most recent novel, *Carpenter's Gothic*,** another and even more corrosive diatribe against capitalist and sundry other corruptions, again told in near-hysterical running dialogue, but this time only 262 pages of it, has been greeted with enormous enthusiasm and respect. Although he is still no candidate for best-sellerdom, Gaddis is nevertheless light years from the days when he was forced to labor for his livelihood in the very thick of the asphalt jungle he so richly despises. He has, in fact, become something of a cult figure among the young, and his most loyal academic followers have worked energetically to establish his reputation as an American master.

Gaddis was born in Manhattan in 1922 and reared in New York City and on Long Island in the "fairly Calvinist tradition" of the Congregationalists. He was educated at boarding school, public school, and then Harvard, where he edited the humor magazine, the *Lampoon*. Gaddis was disqualified for service in World War II on account of a kidney disorder; he felt, he later reported, "resentful at having missed the experience that all my generation had." Returning to Harvard after a convalescence, he found it emptied by the war. After a drinking incident got his name into the local papers, he was asked by the dean to leave without a degree, despite his being in his fourth year.

After leaving Harvard, Gaddis worked for two years as a fact-checker for the *New Yorker*, but a sense of alienation soon propelled him to a life perhaps more typical of young people a couple of generations later than his own. For five years he traveled and occasionally worked in Central America, Europe (particularly Spain and France), and North Africa, interspersing his trips abroad with time in Greenwich Village. Indeed, many Village bohemian types are

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* Penguin (paper), 956 pp., $12.95.
† Penguin (paper), 726 pp., $12.95.
** Viking, 262 pp., $16.95.

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immortalized in *The Recognitions*, and Gaddis himself appears in Jack Kerouac's *The Subterraneans* as a "kid called Harold Sand," "a young novelist looking like Leslie Howard." Following his travels, Gaddis held a variety of jobs—making army films, corporate speechwriting, and doing public relations for a drug firm. Somewhere in these years he also married, had two children, and was subsequently divorced or separated.

Not a promising career from a certain point of view, and it is perhaps no surprise that some years later, as Distinguished Visiting Professor at Bard, Gaddis undertook to teach a course on Failure in American Literature. In one of his handful of essays, he rebukes the United States as "a society where failure can arise in simply not being a 'success,'" and which "holds its most ignominious defeats in store for . . . 'losers'—who fail at something that was not worth doing in the first place." Gaddis's work is based on such a vision of the abrasive emptiness of the American dream.

The Recognitions has a multitude of intersecting plot lines. The main one concerns Wyatt Gwyon, son of a minister. Left motherless at the age of four, Wyatt comes into the care of his dour, punitive, Calvinist Aunt May. During his adolescence, he falls deathly ill. After traditional medicine has tortured him to no avail, he is cured in a primitive ritual performed by his father, who has turned to the study of ancient magic following his disaffection with Christianity.

Wyatt declines to study for the ministry and some years later, after the failure of his own sterile marriage, he begins to forge works of art in the style of the masters of the Flemish Guild. Others cash in on his forgeries, but Wyatt is an innocent. He actually thinks of himself as a "master painter in the Guild, in Flanders," using "pure materials" and working "in the sight of God." The novel suggests that copying, in the sense of reverential "recognition" of the vision of the masters, is more genuinely creative than the spurious originality sponsored by sentimental romantic values.

Nevertheless, Wyatt sickens of the dishonesty involved in forgery. Declining into mental breakdown, he begins a search for his true self. After a failed attempt at a reconciliation with his father, he departs for Europe, where he becomes entangled in yet another conspiracy, this time a counterfeiting ring. Wyatt, who has now changed his name to Stephen, eventually comes to spend time at the monastery to which his father had retreated years before.

At the monastery, Stephen eats bread containing his father's ashes, which have been mistaken for oatmeal. Here too he resumes his art work, but now it seems he "restores" paintings by scraping off their paint. Eventually, Stephen seems to leave the monastery, having arrived at a sort of salvation by means of "recognitions" such as these:

> Look back, if once you're started in living, you're born into sin, then? And how do you atone? By locking yourself up in remorse for what you might have done? Or by living it through. By locking yourself up in remorse with what you know you have done? Or by going back and living it through. [. . .] If it was sin from the start, and possible all the time, to know it's possible and avoid it? Or by living it through [. . .] to go on knowing it's possible and pretend to avoid it? Or . . . or to have lived it through, and live it through, and deliberately go on living it through. [Ellipses not bracketed are Gaddis's]

As EVEN this briefest of extracts suggests, the texture of *The Recognitions* is fabulistic, parodistic, and self-parodistic, layering fiction upon fiction. The book builds upon linguistic games and literary devices and allusions to a variety of languages. Even the annotated *Reader's Guide to William Gaddis's "The Recognitions"* admits that it is often hard to get hold of what is actually happening or to judge if some event is meant to be real or hallucinatory. Bizarre comic events continually intrude into an already surrealistic narrative, mingling the ridiculous and the serious, the ordinary and the mythic. Characters have names like Rectall Brown, Agnes Deigh, and Frank Sinisterra. Several large sections of the book are devoted to recording at great length and in intricate detail—and to no effective purpose—the vapid, superficial, deceitful conversation at artistic gatherings among various hangers-on in the "creative" world.

There is heavy emphasis in *The Recognitions* on sterility—in the general sense that characters can bring nothing original to pass, and in the particular sense that couples cannot or will not conceive, or even carry out plans to adopt, a child. Another emphasis is on sexual confusion. *The Recognitions* features several homosexuals, an apparent hermaphrodite, and one character who is taken to be a homosexual, apparently without reason. And of course, forgery, plagiarism, fakery, impersonation, counterfeiting, and many other kinds of dishonesty abound, all metaphors for Gaddis's chief point—that the world is a fraud.

As Gaddis sees it, religion, art, medicine, all the supposedly salvific structures of modern life are false and empty rituals—counterfeits of ancient ones—that have been superimposed upon a reality too fragmentary and remote for recovery except perhaps through momentary "recognitions," when "all of a sudden everything [is] freed into one recognition, really freed into reality that we never see" (as Wyatt puts it). Yet unfortunately *The Recognitions* is itself but another symptom of the disease it seeks to diagnose. Nothing in the novel is alive; everything is self-conscious, sterile, entirely an affair of the head. The characters have neither texture nor vitality, but are instead just limply executed mouthpieces for points of view which remain contradictory and unresolved.

Gaddis is a writer who goes about saying a writer must not go about saying what he means but leave that task to the critics. Reading *The Recognitions* one begins to suspect that this is because he does not know what he means. Even the concept of "recognition" is fuzzy; sometimes compared to Joyce's "epiphany," it lacks Joyce's luminous conviction of the concreteness of reality. Disintegration, dissolution, decline, fragmentation are not just the themes but

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the overriding experiences of this book and Gaddis lacks the aesthetic (or moral) energy to counter them.

EVEN Gaddis's admirers seem unable to agree on the most basic aspects of the meaning of *The Recognitions*. A volume of criticism, *In Recognition of William Gaddis*, proffers antithetical interpretations, with one critic observing rather tenderly that *The Recognitions* suggests that "nothing is empty or without significance that is spiritually derived from one's deepest and purest humanity," another almost gleefully remarking that the novel is "a black book indeed." And the interpretation that finds Gaddis declaring that "Art is the ultimate expiation" contrasts markedly with the one that finds the novelist insisting that "Truth must finally be sought beyond art's boundaries."

This ambivalence, it has been suggested, is actually part of Gaddis's technique: each reader must come to his own "recognition" and not expect the artist to do it for him. Thus, as a novel which may in the end be no more and no less valuable than the varying and often contradictory interpretations it inspires, *The Recognitions* can be seen as an anticipation of the deconstructionist movement—a work of art that undercuts the efficacy of the artistic act. But then, people tend to come to their own recognitions anyway, so why would they need Gaddis? Some of us had naively hoped that art might aim for something more comprehensive than this.

The fact that Gaddis engages issues of great seriousness and importance—faith, salvation, the function of art—only makes the more exasperating his refusal to see his work through to resolution, his yielding instead to an impulse of aimless accumulation. As he himself remarks in a recent interview: "Once one gets a theme in one's mind it becomes obsessive. If it happens to be forgery, then everywhere you look all you see is forgery, falsification—of religious values, of art—plagiarism, stealing." Of course, if everything is a forgery, then there is little point in working to make distinctions of any kind and nothing then can be worth much effort. As Wyatt remarks, never have there been so many things not worth doing. To this principle, Gaddis's work bears eloquent testimony.

Given Gaddis's abrogation of his own role as an artist, which precisely involves the making of necessary distinctions, *The Recognitions* becomes itself a bit of a fraud, one of those elaborate manipulations of reality—like the tricks performed by the magicians of Pharaoh's court—which impress mightily at first but collapse finally of their own emptiness. Some critics have placed *The Recognitions* within the modernist tradition, or on the cusp that hinges modernism with post-modernism; others have suggested that it stands in a line of savage and uniquely American comedies that include certain works of Mark Twain and Herman Melville's *The Confidence Man*. But once divested of its show of erudition, its literary parodies, its complex array of ultimately pointless mythological allusions, *The Recognitions* is actually closer to the type of 1950's melodrama exemplified by Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (approvingly cited by Gaddis in his essay on failure in American life) and such sub-middlebrow efforts as *Marty* and *Requiem for a Heavyweight*: vaguely adolescent tales about sensitive souls adrift in a harsh modern world saturated with fraud, commercialism, cruelty, and vulgarity. Stripped of its surface complexity, *The Recognitions* is reminiscent of nothing so much as an especially ambitious episode of the old TV series, Playhouse 90, though without the resolution demanded of the popular form and consequently without even its modest yield of satisfaction.

GADDIS'S two subsequent novels do not employ the elaborate structure of mythological and literary allusion characteristic of *The Recognitions*. They are, to be sure, difficult books to read, but more because of their quotient of counterculture faddism than because they are experiments in the avant-garde. For whatever reason, with the passing of the 50's, Gaddis seems to have found his voice. Now his protest is not muffled but open and focused, his nihilism untroubled by lukewarm gestures in the direction of "salvation."

If fraud is the leitmotif of *The Recognitions*, in *JR* it is entropy, i.e., the tendency of systems toward disorder and inertness. As a character remarks in *JR*, "Order is simply a thin, perilous condition we try to impose on the basic reality of chaos."

The entropic decline in *JR* is seen by Gaddis as the result of the subordination of all values in capitalist America to greed and profit. Language must of course reflect such a decline, and in *JR*, the language—almost entirely dialogue—is frantic, fast-paced, fragmentary, full of jargon, cliché, evasion, hesitation, deceit, apology, interruption, irrelevancy, manipulation. Characters seem to possess no identities that have not been corrupted or devastated by the "system." (Perhaps for that reason their names are seldom given; they often have to be identified through their speech habits, as in the favorite epithet of the main character, the eleven-year-old JR, "hot shit.") Settings switch during the brief, blink-and-you'll-miss-them narrative sections, and the whole book proceeds at breakneck speed.

JR is a sixth-grade entrepreneur who parlays his social-studies lessons in free enterprise into a corporate empire. His conglomerate comes to be known as the JR Family of Companies, an irony since the actual families portrayed in the book, including his own, are all fragmented or deteriorating in one way or another. The JR Corporation markets all kinds of improbable and fairly useless goods like wooden picnic forks, pork bellies, and green aspirin, and runs a series of deficient services, like an interlocking chain of nursing homes and funeral parlors. JR operates out of phone booths, chiefly the one in his school, using a handkerchief over the mouthpiece to disguise his boyish voice.

Very little, "educationwise," goes on in school. The principal, Mr. Whiteback, is also a banker, who strives for such goals as "the full utilization potential of in-school television." One of the school's teachers tells his class,

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"You're not here to learn anything, but to be taught so you can pass these tests." JR enlists the help of two of the school's teachers, a writer and a composer, in operating his companies out of a catastrophically disordered apartment. A large cast of supporting characters—bankers, brokers, politicians, public-relations men, businessmen, writers, artists, and a number of wives and girlfriends—are either driven ragged by or are perpetrators of the chaos caused by ringing telephones, blaring radios, intrusive advertising, bureaucratic scheming, snoopy reporters, and assorted other disorders deriving from the junky, kitschy culture they inhabit.

Corporate values have destroyed everything, Gaddis thunders in *JR*: family, education, morality, love, all social structures, relationships between men and women, sex, and even art. Nor can there be any doubt that the corruption is not an aberration but intrinsic to the system. "[W]here do you think you are, over at Russia," asks JR, "where they don't let you do anything? These laws are these laws why should we want to do something illegal if some law lets us do it anyway . . .?"

Gaddis does evince a certain skill in *JR* at capturing the speech patterns of different contemporary types, and at building an intricate, ingenious plot. But the book's monomania, with its Cyclopean vision of the horrors of capitalism as the cause of every evil, pretty thoroughly discredits this achievement. *JR* displays the same helplessness as *The Recognitions* in the face of its material.

THIS kind of one-note thinking also characterizes Gaddis's latest novel, *Carpenter's Gothic*, although it is shorter and takes place in a single setting. Paul Booth, a harried Vietnam veteran who promotes himself as a "media consultant," and his wife Liz, a long-suffering heiress and would-be romantic novelist whose money is tied up in trust, rent a house on the Hudson River. The house is "carpenter's gothic," imitation gothic from the outside, the inside rooms poorly planned and crammed-in every which way—apparently another of Gaddis's fuzzily intentioned frauds. Paul's associates include a slick fundamentalist evangelist, the Reverend Ude, inspired to harvest souls in Africa, and a mining corporation interested in the same part of Africa for different but equally suspect reasons. The owner of the house, McCandless, is a failed novelist and a geologist, who, having surveyed the mining site, knows something about the intricate geopolitical schemes it is inspiring. A Gaddis stand-in, McCandless drops in periodically to rage against the multifarious stupidities of the modern world.

Stupidity is, in fact, Gaddis's major theme here. "*Carpenter's Gothic* . . . is about getting it wrong and stupidity," the author vouchsafed in one of his rare explications of himself. "It's about stupidity and ignorance, stupidity and greed. . . . Stupidity is, as someone says in the book, a hard habit to break." It is also about the Third World—Africa in the novel but, according to Gaddis, Central America as well. "Stupidity and sentimental values are guiding us in Central America right now." "Can't we stop wandering off in other people's wars and pushing people around?" he wonders. "The Nicaragua picture—it is beyond belief what we are doing, and stupid, stupid."

In *Carpenter's Gothic*, Gaddis means to show us the consequences of stupidity. His wrath is unleashed on all kinds of "true believers," not only fundamentalists and creationists but anti-Communists and diehard capitalists who persist in holding blindly to their creeds and in inflicting them on others. ("Revealed truth is the one weapon stupidity's got against intelligence," quoth McCandless.) The true believers, aided by blandly corrupt government lackeys, and prodded by what Gaddis calls the "unswerving punctuality of chance," move toward a denouement in which several characters die violently, a nuclear device is exploded by the U.S. off the African coast while the President rages in headlines against the Evil Empire, and everything apparently returns to business as usual in this black Disneyland.

IN A way that even *The Recognitions* and *JR* do not, *Carpenter's Gothic* shows that Gaddis is not so much an artist as an anti-artist, working with cartoon characters and disembodied ideas. Instead of shaping, he flattens; instead of synthesizing, he fragments; instead of ordering, he disorders; instead of sifting the chaff from the wheat, he collects the chaff and blows it in our faces.

Gaddis enthusiasts have of course insisted that the form of his work is appropriate to its content. And, at different points in his novels, Gaddis himself shows his awareness of the kind of criticism he inspires by denouncing the simple-minded mentality that demands ready-made solutions from art. But what is this if not a by-now hackneyed justification for an impotent imagination? In undercutting the creative act, Gaddis does more to break down the human spirit than any system he opposes. It is true that our current funhouse state of literary criticism in one way or another encourages novels like *JR* and *Carpenter's Gothic*—tons of bloodless verbiage and sweaty contrivances to make incomparable banality sound like truth. But in this corruption, from which he (unlike the various struggling artists of his fiction) has handsomely profited, William Gaddis himself has had a prominent hand.

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Dissidents in Decline

SOVIET DISSENT: CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS FOR NATIONAL, RELIGIOUS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS. By LUDMILLA ALEXEYEVA. *Wesleyan University Press. 521 pp. $35.00.*

SOVIET PSYCHIATRIC ABUSE: THE SHADOW OVER WORLD PSYCHIATRY. By SIDNEY BLOCH and PETER REDDAWAY. *Westview. 288 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

IN THE opinion of many Western observers, the decline of the Soviet dissident movement coincided with (and was largely caused by) the collapse of détente, an event usually dated from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the ensuing sanctions imposed by the Carter administration. Yet as these two books make clear, this interpretation is seriously flawed. In fact, the persecution of dissident intellectuals and activists was a defining feature of Soviet political life *during* the era of détente. By December 1979, when the Afghanistan intervention was launched, the movement for democratic reform—the dissident strain most familiar to Westerners—was in a state of paralysis, with its leading figures in prison camps, psychiatric hospitals, or foreign exile.

The Kremlin's intolerance toward its internal critics carries important implications for the current debate over U.S.-Soviet relations. Even today it is often argued that President Reagan's policies and (especially) his rhetoric have worsened the dissidents' plight. Hard-line policies here evoke hard-line policies there, the argument goes, suggesting that a more accommodating American stance would encourage Moscow to relax its anti-dissident offensive.

This sort of glib reasoning ignores one of the central realities of the Soviet system: an inability to permit any challenge to the orthodoxy of the day that is not controlled from the top. Dissidents are punished because they are dissidents, and not because the United States restricts the sale of computers or describes Communism as a doctrine slated for the junk heap of history. It is true that détente—or rather the promise of détente as embodied in the human-rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords—played an important role in emboldening liberal-minded Soviet intellectuals to speak out against the injustices built into the system. But if anything, détente can be said to have raised false expectations over the possibility of change.

Basically, the Soviets fear dissent because of Communism's inherent weakness as a socioeconomic system and, more importantly, because of the fragility of the Soviet empire. Of the various currents of dissent examined in Ludmilla Alexeyeva's remarkable study, hardly any offers a direct challenge to the Communist party's monopoly of political control. Religious dissidents want nothing more than the right to worship free from state control and raise their children in a religious way. Certain nationality groups seek to live in ancestral homelands from which they were forcibly deported during World War II. Jews and ethnic Germans seek to emigrate; Ukrainians, the Baltic peoples, and other groups want enhanced linguistic and cultural autonomy. Even the agenda of the democratic movement is, by Western standards, decidedly unradical.

To be sure, a few dissidents have drawn obvious connections among such disparate concerns as Jewish emigration, the cultural rights of nationality groups, and Soviet obligations to adhere to the Helsinki pact. Not surprisingly, it has been these figures—Anatoly Shcharansky, for example—who have been the principal targets of state oppression. Yet Shcharansky's fate has been matched, or nearly matched, by that of devout Christians, Roman Catholics from Lithuania, and Ukrainian nationalists whose names mean little to the outside world.

One is reminded by Alexeyeva just how seriously conditions have deteriorated since the downfall of Khrushchev. In 1965, for example, the fact that the poet Joseph Brodsky was placed on trial was a notable event. In hindsight, an even more notable fact was that three members of the writers' union in Leningrad actually testified in Brodsky's behalf. Moreover, when the union's chairman reprimanded the three, he, the chairman, was removed from office by vote of the members while Brodsky's three supporters were named to the organization's executive body.

By the early 1970's, open rebelliousness of this sort had become unthinkable for those intellectuals who cherished the hope of leading a "normal" life in the Soviet Union. Initially, the punishment for dissident intellectuals was deprivation of livelihood, a practice which created a class of "stokers with university degrees"—writers, scientists, and artists who were compelled to accept menial jobs or face prosecution under the notorious anti-parasite laws. Later, a term in the Gulag became the usual punishment, with the conditions of incarceration growing increasingly difficult.

Yet despite the current gloomy state of dissent, Alexeyeva reminds us that the dissident phenomenon is much wider, and thus more durable, than is generally thought in the West. While the democratic movement failed to gain a mass following among the Soviet people, the various movements for religious and nationality rights are supported by millions of people. Here again, the official attitude contrasts sharply with the comparatively tolerant mood which predominated under Khrushchev. Indeed, a number of the current group of Kremlin leaders—particularly those promoted by Andropov and Gorbachev—demonstrated their leadership qualities by successfully repressing nationality movements in the

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Ukraine, Georgia, and other non-Russian republics. This is a telling commentary on the nature of the Gorbachev era which has somehow eluded most Western observers.

Alexeyeva is good at describing how the official machinery of control smothers and grinds down protest movements, obviating the need for overt repression. Consider the case of the Crimean Tatars. During World War II the regime expelled the Tatars from their centuries-old homeland on the grounds of collaboration with the Germans. After Stalin's death, the regime acknowledged, grudgingly, that the charge of collaboration had been unjustified. Nevertheless, scrupulous care was taken to ensure that the Tatars would not be able to reclaim their former homes, or even to live in the Crimea. Employers in the region were instructed not to hire Tatars, and notaries were told to refuse to register deeds of sale.

These simple bureaucratic steps were all that was necessary legally to prevent the Tatars' return to the Crimea. Without a deed of sale, the Tatars could not acquire a residence permit; without a residence permit, they were denied jobs, could not enroll their children in schools, or even receive birth certificates for newborns. Ultimately, those living in a city or region without residence papers could be jailed for violation of internal passport regulations. As a result, many Crimean Tatars have abandoned the struggle, financially exhausted from the burden of supporting those trying to resettle, and psychologically drained by the seemingly insurmountable barriers erected by the state.

Alexeyeva calls the tactics of the regime during the 1970's "Stalinism without physical elimination." The Soviets do not execute political prisoners, although there are a number of cases where dissidents died under circumstances similar to the Popieluszko case in Poland, in which members of the security police killed a Catholic priest. The principal innovation employed to terrorize domestic critics has been psychiatric abuse—the sentencing of otherwise sane men to indefinite terms in mental institutions. Although instances of psychiatric terror were recorded during Stalin's time, psychiatry as an instrument of political oppression became commonplace only in the 1970's.

According to Sidney Bloch and Peter Reddaway, the number of political prisoners subjected to psychiatric abuse has not been enormous—500 or so over the past two decades. But the intimidatory power of psychiatric abuse is incalculable. Dissidents consider the prospect of consignment to a mental hospital far more frightening than a comparable term in a prison camp. The sane person fears for his own mind. He must coexist with inmates who really are insane; he is subjected to drug treatments with dangerous side-effects; and he never knows when, or if, he will be released, since release is granted only upon his being "cured," a judgment which often depends on the recantation of political convictions.

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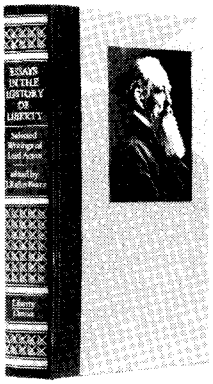

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OF LIBERTY

By John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton
Edited by J. Rufus Fears

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Soviet Psychiatric Abuse, the second study on the subject by Bloch and Reddaway, specifically deals with the worldwide campaign against the psychiatric oppression of dissidents that was waged during the 1970's and 1980's. The culmination of this campaign was the 1983 withdrawal of the Soviet Union from the World Psychiatric Association, an action taken in response to an expulsion move that stood a good chance of success.

There are important lessons in this story for those who despair of the democratic world's ability to influence the Soviet machinery of domestic oppression. For as described by the authors, the drive against psychiatric abuse ranks as a model of anti-totalitarian struggle.

It will come as little surprise that those principally responsible for carrying out the campaign outside the Soviet Union—mainly psychiatric groups from Great Britain and the United States—were forced to confront not merely the Soviet psychiatric establishment but those from the democratic world who were staunchly opposed to the "politicization" of world psychiatry. That Soviet policies were ultimately condemned is the result of exhaustive, scientifically rigorous documentation compiled by Western psychiatrists and by Soviet psychiatrists opposed to the political use of psychiatry. The most compelling evidence emerged from psychiatric examinations of the victims of abuse; in practically every case the examining psychiatrists found no evidence to warrant a judgment of mental disorder.

The Soviets might still have avoided censure had their counterstrategy been carried out with greater flexibility. The Soviets stonewalled, lied, distorted, and fabricated statements by visiting Western psychiatrists, and refused to permit contacts between foreign psychiatric bodies and Soviet doctors who were not considered totally reliable members of the official apparatus. This latter step proved particularly damaging, since it destroyed the fall-back argument of those opposed to sanctions. That argument was that punishing Soviet psychiatry would make contacts between Western psychiatrists and their ordinary (i.e., non-political) Soviet colleagues impossible.

The authors stress that those in favor of sanctions were not motivated by anti-Soviet sentiments; they would have been pleased to drop the whole matter if progress had been made toward the end of psychiatric abuse. And, in fact, some progress on this score was made. There does appear to have been a decrease in the political use of psychiatry during the 1980's, a time when the anti-dissident offensive was at its most ferocious. Presumably the worldwide outcry against psychiatric abuse played a role here. Moreover, the fact that psychiatric terror has not been widely employed by other Communist countries suggests a certain sensitivity to world opinion. On the other hand, Soviet citizens who publicly protested the political use of psychiatry were either forced into exile or sentenced to long periods of confinement. The most significant figure in the internal struggle against psychiatric terror, Dr. Anatoly Koryagin, in 1981 was given a twelve-year sentence, one of the harshest punishments meted out to a dissident in the post-Stalin era.

In urging the West to treat the Soviet psychiatric establishment as pariahs, Dr. Koryagin observed that foreign contact conveys the message that these men "are accepted internationally, not as violators of medical ethics and norms but as colleagues and equal partners." Reading these words, and pondering Dr. Koryagin's fate, heightens one's dismay at a report that one of his tormentors has been rehabilitated by the international medical profession. In attendance at a recent symposium in Washington, D.C. on the "medical implications of nuclear war" was Dr. Marat Vartanian, director of the All-Union Scientific Center for Mental Health, and described by Bloch and Reddaway as having had "a distinctive role for over a decade as chief apologist for Soviet psychiatry to the world medical community." A paper co-authored by Vartanian on the psychological after-effects of nuclear war was cited approvingly at the gathering. It would thus appear that Dr. Vartanian has earned a promotion. Having for years defended one of the most inhumane practices of an inhumane system, he has now been given the assignment of advancing the cause of peace, Soviet-style.

In Exile

DIASPORA: AN INQUIRY INTO THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH WORLD. BY HOWARD M. SACHAR. *Harper & Row. 539 pp. $27.50.*

Reviewed by EDWARD ALEXANDER

HOWARD SACHAR'S survey of the condition of what he calls the "third world" of contemporary Jewry—that is, the 4.5 million Jews who live outside of Israel and North America—belongs unmistakably to what Thomas De Quincey called the literature of knowledge as distinct from the literature of power. The function of books in De Quincey's first category is to teach, that of books in the latter category is to move. "What do you learn from *Paradise Lost*?" asked De Quincey. "Nothing at all. What do you learn from a cookery-book? Something new, something that you did not know before, in every paragraph. But would you therefore put the . . . cookery-book on a higher level of estimation than the divine poem?" De Quincey's point was that a million separate items of knowledge are but a million steps along the same earthly level, whereas the very first step in power sets the reader on a Jacob's ladder that reaches toward a region above the earth.

Since literature, however construed, is not religion, one cannot expect it to raise us from this world toward the one to come. But we might reasonably expect that a massive study of Diaspora Jewry would at some point at least mention, if not explore, the fact that in the Jewish religion exile has a specific theological meaning. It is surely very interesting to know that the Viennese Jews who survived World War II were still people of principle who would have nothing to do with *Ostjuden* (Eastern European

EDWARD ALEXANDER *is professor of English at Tel Aviv University.*

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Jews), and that 15,000 French Jews demonstrated their understanding of the Jewish meaning of that same war by converting to Roman Catholicism after 1945, and that leftists in Argentina who cared nothing for Israel throughout their lives became instant Zionists when *aliyah* was their only alternative to prison. It is even interesting, if somewhat less so, to learn that by 1909 Jews controlled more than half the licensed brothels in Buenos Aires, or that the holdings of the Feffer family of São Paulo include "not less than 70 million trees," or that the Hebraica Sports and Community Center of Buenos Aires is fourteen stories tall and has a gymnasium, ballet rooms, and a swimming pool as well as a library.

But it would also be instructive to learn what the many Diaspora Jews interviewed by Sachar think are the implications for them of the regular ritual acknowledgment by observant Jews that "Because of our sins we were exiled from our country and banished far from our land." This traditional explanation of why the Jews are in exile, an explanation that assigns blame for their misfortunes to the Jews themselves and not to Romans, Crusaders, Cossacks, and Nazis, never comes into play in Sachar's book. The reason for this is that the author appears to have forgotten that the Jews *are* in exile, and many of his subjects, like the Syrian refugee in Brooklyn who unblushingly declares that only the poor and backward Syrian Jews went to Israel, believe that exile is a sign of reward for virtue rather than punishment for sin.

SACHAR'S inquiry into Jewish exile amputates from exile its religious meaning and is therefore like a stream that can rise no higher than its source. Nevertheless, to navigate this stream is to learn a great deal about the present condition of Diaspora Jewry. The scope of the book is wide, ranging from Australia to Peru, Finland to South Africa. Those who are curious about how Jews live, how they came to live, and why they continue to live in such places as Uruguay, Australia, and Ecuador will find much to satisfy their curiosity in this book.

Inevitably, Sachar has had to be selective, yet he never tells us what his principle of selection is. Why, for example, should there be a discussion of the Jews of Chile but nothing at all about the Jews of Ethiopia? Inevitably, too, he has had to give more attention to the Jews of certain countries, such as the Soviet Union and France, than to others. But it is never clear what principle of organization requires that Belgium and Holland be included when they are accorded only perfunctory treatment, barely distinguishable from a Jewish travel-guide entry. It is easy to forget that exclusion is as much a function of intellect as inclusion if you are writing a book that tells stories but lacks a plot or unifying argument.

Whenever possible, Sachar has woven his account of a particular community around the story of a prominent figure in that community whom the author has taken the trouble to know and to interview. In Italy, this is Bruno Zevi, the renowned architect, who provides Sachar with a vivid account of the reaction of the Jews of Rome to the conversion of their chief rabbi to Catholicism in 1945. In Denmark, it is Rabbi Bent Melchior, who contributes the observation, echoed in virtually every part of the Diaspora Sachar visits, that "Synagogue attendance is our Achilles' heel. . . . Among our young people, Israel, not organized religon, is the focus of identity." In Brazil, it is Benno Militzky, a Diaspora rarity (it is to Sachar's credit that he recognizes him as such) who tells the various world-betterers among Brazilian Jewry that the Jewish way to reform society is to begin by making an honest man of yourself, thereby guaranteeing that there will be one less rascal in the world. But alas, says Militzky, "since the beginning of the Diaspora we Jews haven't learned to live in an open society, haven't found the proper balance."

At the center of Sachar's lengthy, judicious, and shapely account of Soviet Jewry are the stories and the voices of Mikhail Zand, the linguist, and Lydia Slovin, who in the

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by
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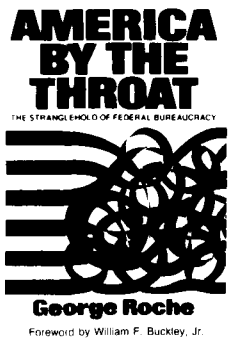

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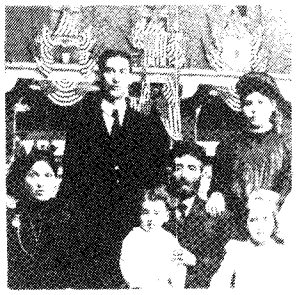

THE FIRST JEW

Prejudice & Politics in an American Community 1900-1932

By Richard Klayman

At the turn of the century, several thousand East European Jews settled in a once rural ward of a small New England city where they sought to earn a living and make a life. Richard Klayman tells the story of the Jews of Malden, Massachusetts and in so doing illuminates the lives of ethnic people in cities and towns throughout America. It is a goal of this work that history will not forsake the lowly or the common, the unheralded and the largely forgotten masses of American immigrants.

I read [*The First Jew*] with much interest. It is a very useful addition to the literature.
Oscar Handlin
Harvard University

Richard Klayman's book *The First Jew* is an excellent and useful portrait of an American community...It is more than the story of turn of the century Jews; it is the story of Americans. And it is more than a description of a small town; indeed, it is a portrait of an America that is now part of all of us.
Rep. Edward J. Markey
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early 1950's experienced the birth of the organized hysteria of the "doctors' plot" just as she was giving birth to her second child, who later became a leader of the *samizdat* and *aliyah* movements, and who still later felt her triumph turn to ashes in the mouth when, as a Jewish Agency official in Vienna in 1979, she had to compete with the representatives of HIAS and the recruiters of the Satmar Hasidim for the Soviet Jews who rode to freedom (but not necessarily to Israel) on the coattails of heroic figures like herself, Zand, and Mark Azbel.

The greatest paradox of *Diaspora* is that its hero is Zion. Despite important local variations, the Jewish communities of the Diaspora are all being eroded by intermarriage, assimilation, and a suicidally low birth rate. In Denmark, in Greece, in Latin America, in Great Britain, Sachar finds compelling evidence that the Jewish community is on the road to extinction; in France only the "transfusion" of Maghreb immigrants saved an ancient community that had been atrophying for a century. In virtually every corner of the Diaspora, what keeps the Jewish community alive is Zionism, the main principle of which has always been, precisely, negation of the Diaspora. In Sweden, we learn, members of the B'nei Akiva youth movement are fortified as Jews by visits to Israel, though they will not live there. In France, Israel has been the principal focus of Jewishness since 1956. Across the channel, "the integuments binding Anglo-Jewry appear to be neither faith nor a shared cultural heritage, but a kind of unfocused Zionism. . . ." In Argentina, the whole crazy quilt of Israeli political parties has been incorporated into elections within the Ashkenazi community.

Instead of ending the Diaspora, Zionism has perpetuated it, politically as well as spiritually. Whatever his own ultimate sympathies may be, Sachar (who is the author of *A History of Israel*) is scrupulously honest in assembling evidence that Israel, far from exacerbating the vulnerability of Diaspora Jewry (as anti-Zionist Jewish leftists frequently allege), has in fact enhanced Western Jewry's legal and physical security and even its political status. He deviates from this position only when the image of a Likud government disturbs his sense of the eternal fitness of things. Thus, he complains that Menachem Begin's government greatly discomfited "Diaspora Jewish liberals" by its "annexationist policies," but makes no similar complaint about the discomfiture caused South African Jews by Labor government votes in the UN, or Argentinian Jews by the capture of Adolf Eichmann, or Ethiopian Jews by the indiscretions of Moshe Dayan. Also, although he has much to say of the consequences, good and bad, of Israeli actions for Diaspora Jewry, we hear little of the damage done to Israel by such sinister Diaspora figures as Bruno Kreisky and Jacobo Timerman.

BECAUSE Sachar is a good listener, he brings us voices, Jewish voices, that continue to haunt the air after we have finished this book. Two in particular linger with me. One is the Jew in the mountains of Ecuador who mournfully asks: "Are we Jews, heirs to one of the world's most sophisticated civilizations, to end our days here among illiterate Indians?" This voice is music to Sachar's inward ear, but for the wrong reason. He cannot understand why Jews would want to live out their lives in Indian, mestizo, or black Latin America. He does not see that the question, if asked by someone committed to the *future* of the Jewish people, is also relevant in France or Britain, if not so obviously compelling as in Ecuador.

The second voice, a kind of foil to the Ecuadoran, is that of Herman Abrahamsson, a Swedish Jewish immigrant to Israel whom Sachar interviews in Haifa. " 'What brings you here?' I persisted, with the oblique delicacy I had learned from the Israelis. 'Zionism?' '*Narishkeit*,' he sighed. 'Utter foolishness.' " Here the meaning of the dialogue comes through, as in one of Lemuel Gulliver's solemn accounts of the strange people he met in Lilliput or Brobdingnag, as an ironic increment to what is actually said. That the irony is unintended be-

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comes clear from the conclusion to the book, the only section where Sachar tries to make a case for the "principle" of Diaspora.

That case, roughly, is as follows. The only kind of Jewish survival that is worth having comes from facing the "challenge of emancipation" offered by the Gentile world. Jewish culture has only flourished when Jews were in touch with "the talents and progressive ideas of advanced surrounding cultures." When they lived in isolation from the Gentiles, they produced only "kabbalistic sterility," hasidic "hysteria," and other abominations. The real threat to the Diaspora is not cultural or economic or political, but demographic. Yet even here Sachar sees hope coming from the Gentiles. Perhaps "the Viking women proudly wearing Stars of David in Stockholm and Copenhagen may . . . yet be joined in future years by other Europeans and Latin Americans"—presumably because some conservationist impulse will make them want to replenish a community that is incapable of retaining even the few offspring it has.

What Sachar conveniently chooses to overlook in this sanguine conclusion is that the Jews who were in the past able to respond creatively to their Diaspora cultural environments without ceasing to be Jews had a culture and an inner world of their own, something that Sachar's own book shows them to have lost. His declaration of faith in the cultural renewal and demographic resuscitation of the Diaspora, coming as it does after nearly 500 pages of evidence to the contrary, is like the assertion of the biologist who, after diligently tracing the evolution of man from his pre-simian ancestors, conjectures that men will ultimately become elephants. You cannot contradict such a person. But before he can expect you to share his opinion, he ought to produce evidence that our ears are getting more floppy, our skin tougher, our noses growing into trunks, our incisors developing into tusks, and our height and weight increasing in Brobdingnagian proportions.

Ironically, the only indisputable evidence of demographic growth in the Diaspora that Sachar can produce issues from the very same place that sustains the Diaspora culturally and spiritually: namely, the state of Israel. But the infusion of large numbers of Israeli citizens into the lands of exile is no more likely to be a source of comfort to the Diaspora than it has been to Zion.

The Newcomers

CLAMOR AT THE GATES: THE NEW AMERICAN IMMIGRATION. Edited by NATHAN GLAZER. *Institute for Contemporary Studies Press. 337 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL NOVAK

LIBERTY on this planet being in shorter supply than oil, refugees and immigrants by the millions still seek haven elsewhere than in the land of their birth —above all, and in increasing numbers, in the United States, which FDR aptly called "the land of immigrants." Although our nation once, in the Immigration Act of 1924, took draconian measures to deal with this "clamor at the gates," in recent decades we have responded to it more by drift and evasion than by conscious principle.

Whom shall we welcome? According to which principles of morality, law, and administrative policy? And with what consequences? These are the questions that Nathan Glazer and his colleagues set out not so much to answer as to expose in their full complexity in the fourteen essays collected in this timely volume. The essays provide sufficient historical background, summaries of current arguments, and glimpses of probable futures to bring any curious reader up to a significant level of sophistication.

MICHAEL NOVAK *holds the George Frederick Jewett Chair at the American Enterprise Institute. His most recent book is* Freedom With Justice.

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In his introduction, Glazer points out that the tiny quotas set for East European immigrants in 1924 were so unbendingly adhered to that after 1939 almost none of the hunted Jews of Europe could enter the U.S. Harry Truman's efforts in 1948 to exempt displaced persons resulted in a bill "that, unbelievably, discriminated against the Jewish survivors of the war and in favor of the ethnic Germans who had been expelled from Soviet Russia and the Baltic states." These severe quotas stood firm in the subcomittee hearings of 1952, solidified in the startling judgment of the U.S. Senate: "Without giving credence to any theory of Nordic superiority, the subcommittee believes that the adoption of the national-origins formula was a rational and logical method of numerically restricting immigration in such a manner as to best preserve *the sociological and cultural balance* in the population of the United States" (emphasis added).

Soon, however, waves of refugees from Communism in Hungary (1956) and Cuba (1960), together with the U.S. civil-rights revolution of the early 1960's, changed the climate. The policy of favoring Northwestern European populations came to seem, Glazer writes, "basically immoral and wrong." In new legislation passed during the Johnson era, all nations were treated alike. Every nation, regardless of size, was allowed 20,000 immigrants per year, except that a ceiling of 170,000 from the entire Asian hemisphere was imposed. Even at that, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy testified in 1964 that he actually expected no more than 5,000 immigrants from all of Asia during the first year of the new regulations, and fewer after that.

In this, Kennedy was proved dramatically wrong. As economic conditions steadily improved in Western Europe, fewer West Europeans arrived than the legislation allowed for. During the 1970's, by contrast, the total number of Asians in the U.S. doubled to three-and-a-half million; the figure now seems to be doubling again during the 1980's. The largest number of all, however, have come from Mexico, joined by immigrants from elsewhere in Latin America. And the floods of refugees from worldwide Communism have continued to increase.

In 1978, the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh was made chairman of a Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy. The executive staff director of this commission was Lawrence H. Fuchs of Brandeis, who opens this volume with a brilliant short account of his own seasoned views, which he concisely summarizes as "pro-immigration and anti-illegal immigration":

> I would open the front door more widely and strengthen both the definition of family and independent immigrants; make much more explicit what must be done to close the back door; and take greater care to protect the rights of aliens in the processes of admission, exclusion, and deportation. At the same time I would strengthen and upgrade the Immigration and Naturalization Service and provide for much more coherent and prestigious oversight of our immigration policy through the Immigration Advisory Council and an . . . independent immigration court appointed by the President of the United States. Finally, I would recognize that no nation should try to deal with the issue of international migration by itself. I would take several initiatives to strengthen international arrangements to manage the problems that accrue as a result of transnational migration, and to inhibit the flows that cause those problems, remembering always that immigration is not just a source of problems but also of creativity and strength, especially in the United States.

In the next three essays, Harris N. Miller recounts the history of the Simpson-Mazzoli bill, which

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enacts some of the Hesburgh Commission's recommendations; Edwin Harwood discusses the ticklish and outsized problems involved in enforcing immigration law; and Rodolfo O. de la Garza discusses Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants in the light of immigration reform. There follow three essays on the effects of immigration on the U.S. economy, and contributions by Peter I. Rose and Peter Skerry on, respectively, Asian American and Mexican American politics. Turning toward the future, Michael S. Teitelbaum explores the need for a new approach to international norms for dealing with the tragedy of mass expulsions, and Peter H. Schuck argues for a new definition of national community.

About 600,000 immigrants now enter our gates each year. Being an American is a "desirable privilege," Glazer writes in his concluding essay, "one in short supply when compared with those who want it." Yet we as a nation seem to lack the self-confidence to regulate the granting of this privilege. We easily recognize special obligations to reunite families, to accept political refugees, to "make a modest bow to persons with occupations in short supply," and even to welcome those with special gifts of discipline, vitality, and enterprise. But what about the forced expulsion of criminals and the mentally disordered, such as those Castro drove to the U.S.? What about our obligations to the legions of the world's unfortunate? If we open the gates, will our "quality of life" suffer—or, to the contrary, be enhanced? And what if the new immigrants do better here than our "traditional" minorities; will their success breed severe social conflict?

Evidence on these questions is mixed, and our powers of prediction are notoriously weak. Nonetheless, one comes away from this volume with certain strengthened convictions. One is that respect for law will suffer if immigration law is perceived as unprincipled and if its enforcement remains as ineffective as it now demonstrably is. A second is that in this field "laissez-faire" is not good enough. Both on the international level and on the national level, responsible government officials must arrive at just principles and effective systems of enforcement, lest grievances continue to multiply. As this careful, responsible, and generous-minded volume reminds us, we may not yet have all the answers, but we have a lot to worry about.

On Foreign Policy

Observations: Selected Speeches and Essays, 1982-1984. By Henry Kissinger. *Little, Brown. 246 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by Larry D. Nachman

One senses that Henry Kissinger's reputation, at least among the intellectuals, has grown since the publication of the two volumes of his memoirs, *White House Years* and *Years of Upheaval.* Both volumes were deservedly well received, even by some who had criticized him during his years in office and who still remained unpersuaded by his intelligent and passionate defense of the foreign policies of the Nixon administration. This favorable response owed much to the surprising narrative skill revealed by Kissinger, whose previous works had tended to be academic in the worst sense of the word. Reading the memoirs, one was convinced that this, indeed, was how a political life was lived.

Kissinger's *Observations* is a thin volume, a compilation of recent occasional pieces. The intelligence of the author of *White House Years* and *Years of Upheaval* is present, but the sensibility is missing; these are observations in the sense of reflections, but nothing is literally observed, nor are there any of those remarkably sharp and concrete assessments of persons and events which made the memoirs so compelling.

This return to an exclusive engagement with issues is a result of conviction (rather than merely of

Larry D. Nachman *is professor of political science at the College of Staten Island.*

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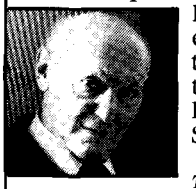

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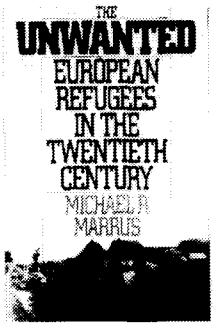

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the circumstance of Kissinger's being out of office):

> Once having been involved in policy-making, the returned academic should have learned that no outsider is in a position to offer day-to-day advice. He can never acquire enough of the details, mastery of which is the prerequisite for the sense of nuance that spells the difference between shaping events or being dominated by them. The proper role for the outsider is to raise the middle- and long-term issues that the press of business keeps from the policy-maker. In short, it is rarely possible to contribute to tactics and only occasionally to foreign-policy directions and purposes.

Anyone who has read Kissinger's memoirs will know that this apparently sober and abstemious advice conceals a good deal of past anger and resentment. Frequently in those volumes Kissinger raged against critics outside of government whose attacks on our Vietnam policy, he said, were lacking both in good faith and a knowledge of the facts. Kissinger was particularly bitter about those former officials of the Johnson administration who had been architects of the war which Nixon had inherited and who now sought to salve their conscience and their reputation by *joining with their former opponents*. It is as if Kissinger had resolved upon leaving office that he would never do to his successors what was done to him.

One cannot help feeling, however, that Kissinger's reticence is excessive. It is not necessary to know everything to comment responsibly on the course of events. The verbal wars of Kissinger's years in office, moreover, were distinguished not so much by uninformed criticism as by an ongoing controversy in which all the participants assumed that their opponents were speaking and acting in bad faith.

Yet for all its generality or, as Kissinger would put it, concern for the middle and long range, *Observations* contains much of interest. These papers, published almost a decade after Kissinger left office, reflect both his own abiding interests and enduring problems of American foreign policy. Moreover, *Observations* reveals a persistent and perhaps surprising fault in Kissinger's thinking about politics, namely, an optimism of the kind that often besets intellectuals, who tend to believe that because a policy is reasonable, it will be adopted.

MUCH of this collection is taken up with the question of the Atlantic alliance. Kissinger brings us back to a principal focus of his before he took office. In 1966, he published a book on the subject, *The Troubled Partnership*. In his memoirs, he describes the shambles that resulted from the 1972 American initiative to reestablish the alliance on a new basis which would reflect contemporary realities. The "Year of Europe," as it was called, became a comedy in several fits and starts as the foreign ministries of our allies fell over themselves in flight from our eager embrace. Each of our "partners" feared giving the appearance of negotiating for Europe as a whole. Yet there was no agency or institution that *could* authoritatively negotiate for Europe. And so we were left with nothing but some fine speeches.

The recurring difficulties of the alliance are maddeningly hard to resolve but rather easy to state. In 1985 as in 1945, it is a vital interest of the United States that Europe be defended from the Soviet Union. All concerned know and understand this. Our military presence in Europe is not a charitable enterprise but a political necessity. Therefore, we are in a poor bargaining position vis-à-vis our allies.

Another constant since 1945 is that NATO has never maintained sufficient troops in Europe to repel an invasion by the Soviet Union. "From the birth of NATO," as Kissinger remarks, "a full conventional defense has been part neither of its strategy nor of its efforts." Instead, the deterrent has for four decades been nuclear weapons. What has changed in that period is the capacity of the Soviet Union to retaliate. Originally, the idea was that the Soviets would be restrained from incursions into Western Europe by fear of nuclear attack in reprisal. Now the deterrent

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rests upon the bare possibility that the United States would be willing to commit suicide rather than have Western Europe go down. As long as that possibility exists—it does not have to be likely or probable, merely possible—the "nuclear umbrella" deters. This is not so much a strategy as an effort to create a doubt in the minds of Soviet planners. It is a thought-experiment, however bizarre and dangerous.

What Kissinger, among many other rational people, has long known is that all this makes little sense. What is needed both to avoid a nuclear war and to provide a reasonable deterrent are larger armies: large European armies and a larger American military establishment in Europe. Kissinger puts the matter clearly though obliquely:

> It *must* be our policy to reduce reliance on nuclear war to the greatest extent possible, by creating other means to resist aggression.

The problem is that these "other means" are expensive and unpopular. Our European allies have for long indulged themselves in the luxury of spending only a tiny percent of their GNP for armies. Freed from that massive expense by America's nuclear arsenal, they are in the enviable position of not having to prepare themselves for the most serious military danger they might face. Thus they alternate between presenting lectures on the madness of nuclear armaments and making anxious representations for reassurances that the United States will not withdraw from Europe. And meanwhile, the United States in the post-Vietnam period has reduced its own conventional forces.

THE failure to achieve an adequate military posture is compounded by the absence of political agreement on foreign-policy goals outside of Europe, a subject on which *Observations* contains some of Kissinger's bitterest comments. It is clearly an expression of anguish when so sober and measured a writer as Kissinger, and one with so keen a sense of the historical and moral importance of the alliance, can conclude:

> It is not possible, nor is it desirable, that we pursue parallel policies all over the world, but it is also not possible or compatible with the alliance that we agree on *no* major policy around the world. It seems to me that we are perilously close to drifting into such a state of affairs.

Nor is his impatience concealed when he writes:

> And what is one to make of the almost deferential pleas by all major NATO countries for the resumption of a dialogue that the Soviets have interrupted? Or of the upgrading of all major European delegations except the French to the Andropov funeral, compared with the Brezhnev rites fifteen months ago—especially as Andropov's rule was marked by the flagrant attempt to influence the German election, the walkout from arms-control talks, and the shooting down of the Korean airliner, not to speak of Andropov's fifteen-year stewardship of the KGB?

The real question, for Kissinger, is not what is to be done about this, but how to get it done. His recommendation is to change the structure of NATO, to "Europeanize" it, by appointing a European as its military commander and by giving Europe the primary responsibility for its own defense. Why would Europeans wish to accept the risks and burdens of such a change, which would imply a significant increase in defense spending and the possibility of engaging the Soviet Union without the United States being committed? Kissinger suggests that the United States deliver what amounts to an ultimatum: if Europe fails to increase its conventional forces, we should consider that the defense of Europe is nuclear, and reduce our own forces there substantially, "perhaps up to half."

The defect of this ultimatum is that it may be as little credible as the nuclear deterrent has become. Such a withdrawal might be con-

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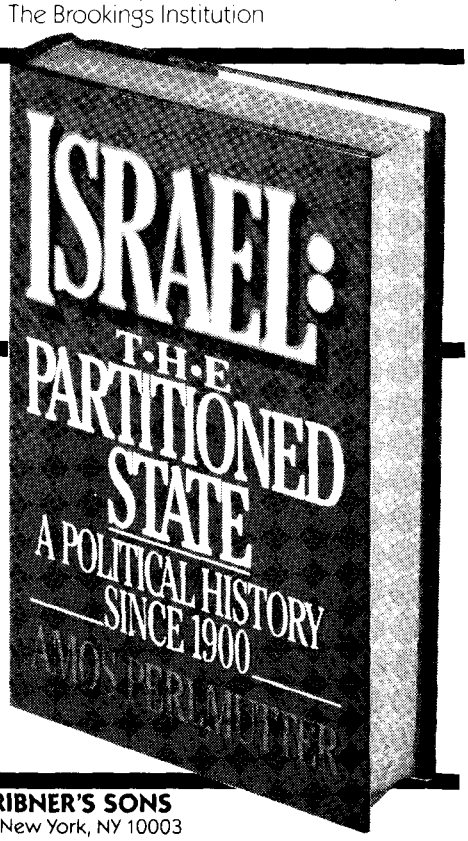

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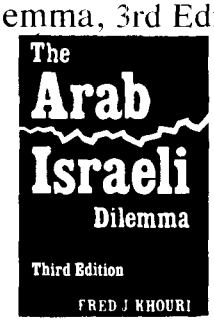

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strued, at home and abroad, as a triumph of American isolationism, and help bring on one of the least desirable conditions in international affairs, uncertainty and unpredictability. One cannot plausibly threaten to do something that is antagonistic to one's interests. As Kissinger more than anyone should know, we have been lying over this barrel long enough to understand its contours.

THE problem that haunts Kissinger, in his memoirs as well as in *Observations*, the problem which by temperament and training he finds unfathomable, is how democracies can maintain a foreign policy that is consistent, sophisticated, and appropriate to new circumstances. The policies he condemns in Europe are the results of democratic public pressures, pressures which also exist here. "The United States," he writes, "cannot lead the alliance or even contribute to its cohesion if we do not restore bipartisanship to our foreign policy." But such bipartisanship issued from a consensus on foreign policy that developed toward the close of World War II. The consensus is gone; and what divides Americans will inevitably find its way into partisan politics.

This same essential fact of democratic politics lies at the root of the inconsistencies which Kissinger knows to be so damaging to the conduct of our foreign policy:

> Without continuity we risk growing irrelevant. Americans do not always understand to what extent our freewheeling process of arriving at decisions unsettles those who have staked their political survival on us. When a foreign statesman follows our lead, he ties his reputation to our judgment. When we reverse course, we in effect undermine him. This happens almost across the board when administrations change and, frequently, even within administrations.

But, again, administrations change for us and for most of our NATO allies as a result of elections. There is no way to isolate foreign from domestic politics. However valid Kissinger's criticisms, however great the danger from short-sightedness here and across the Atlantic, he will come no closer to a solution to the issues he raises than he did while in office until he confronts the problem of foreign policy-making in a democracy. It may even be a problem incapable of solution.

Tragic Decline

THE PRICE OF THE TICKET: COLLECTED NONFICTION 1948-1985. By JAMES BALDWIN. *St. Martin's. 704 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by TERRY TEACHOUT

"THE failure of the protest novel," James Baldwin wrote in 1949, "lies in its rejection of life, the human being, the denial of his beauty, dread, power, in its insistence that it is his categorization alone which is real and which cannot be transcended." It was around this time that American critics first began to speak of Baldwin as a writer with the sensibility and detachment of a potentially first-rate artist; with the 1953 publication of *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, a beautifully written first novel about Harlem life, he proved them correct.

That book, together with the best of his early essays for COMMENTARY and *Partisan Review*, quickly gave James Baldwin a well-deserved reputation as an outstandingly gifted writer—and the only black writer in America capable of staying out of what Lionel Trilling called in another connection "the bloody crossroads" between literary art and politics. Soon his name began to appear regularly in middlebrow magazines like *Harper's* and the *New Yorker*.

But Baldwin's qualifications for playing the "Great Black Hope," as he later characterized his role, began to look a little more problematic with each passing year. He had, after all, abandoned Harlem for Paris with what looked suspiciously like enthusiasm. His ornate prose style reminded readers more

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TERRY TEACHOUT, *a new contributor, is an assistant editor of* Harper's *and a regular contributor to* National Review *and* High Fidelity.

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of Henry James than of Richard Wright. And he was, though he did not advertise it at first, a homosexual. None of this seemed to have much to do with the kinds of things people like Martin Luther King, on the one hand, or Malcolm X, on the other hand, were saying in public. Younger and more militant blacks took elaborate pains to distance themselves from Baldwin; Eldridge Cleaver, in *Soul on Ice*, went so far as to accuse Baldwin of harboring a "shameful, fanatical, fawning, sycophantic love of the whites."

Eventually, perhaps in response to such criticism, the tone of Baldwin's work began to take on a raw, politicized stridency which had not previously been a part of his literary equipment. This stridency fatally compromised his standing as a writer of fiction; *Another Country* was the last of his novels to be taken at all seriously by the critics (and by no means all of them). But Baldwin's essays, early and late, have somehow remained impervious to revaluation—which makes it all the more useful to have this new volume of his "collected nonfiction."

The Price of the Ticket contains, complete and unabridged, *Notes of a Native Son; Nobody Knows My Name; The Fire Next Time; Nothing Personal; The Devil Finds Work; No Name in the Street*; and a couple of dozen previously uncollected articles of largely exiguous interest. The only important omissions are the autobiographical preface to *Notes of a Native Son* and Baldwin's latest book, an essay on the Atlanta child murders called *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*.* It is a fat omnibus, clearly a gesture to posterity, and an attempt to consolidate Baldwin's shaky literary reputation. Times and tastes have changed profoundly since Baldwin published his first important essay in COMMENTARY forty-odd years ago, and so one inevitably wonders: does he still *sound* like a major writer? Is the literary value of his work compromised by his consuming obsession with race? Is his message as compelling as ever—or simply irrelevant?

Baldwin's first collection of essays, *Notes of a Native Son* (1955), was received with more or less uncritical admiration (in a typical comment Alfred Kazin wrote: "*Notes of a Native Son* . . . is the work of an original literary talent who operates with as much power in the essay form as I've ever seen"). But *Notes of a Native Son* is likely to strike today's reader as uneven in a way that Baldwin's first novel, for all its flaws, is not. Baldwin spends the whole first part of the book searching for the right things to write about and the right tone in which to write about them. Though he is reasonably competent at it, straight reportage obviously does not become him; as for his initial attempts at literary criticism, these come out sounding hopelessly stilted.

What finally pulled Baldwin's nonfiction writing up to the level of the best parts of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* was his discovery, in a 1953 essay (also collected in *Notes of a Native Son*), "Stranger in the Village," of the great good pronoun of his literary destiny: the concrete, liberating "I" which, as with Proust's "Marcel," would bring his idiosyncratic style into the sharpest focus. In this piece Baldwin finally learned to do in his writing what, as a budding young preacher in Harlem, he must have heard about in the cradle: to begin with anecdote and end in generalization:

> From all available evidence no black man had ever set foot in this tiny Swiss village before I came. I was told before arriving that I would probably be a "sight" for the village; I took this to mean that people of my complexion were rarely seen in Switzerland, and also that city people are always something of a "sight" outside the city. It did not occur to me—possibly because I am an American—that there could be people anywhere who had never seen a Negro.

With the simple but pregnant discovery of autobiography as a vehicle for social criticism, Baldwin had at last struck a workable balance between the two most char-

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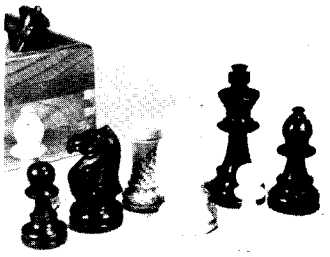

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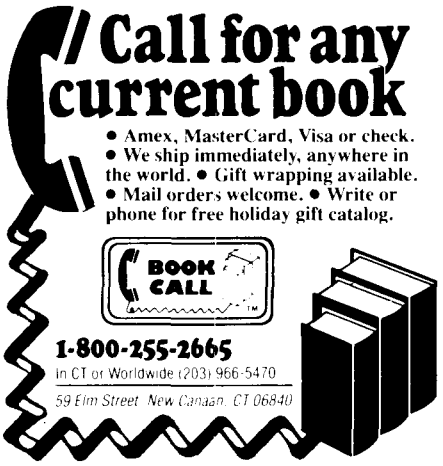
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acteristic aspects of his artistic personality, the fiery Harlem preacher and the urbane Parisian memoirist. In the 1955 essays "Equal in Paris" and "Notes of a Native Son," both written in the first person, it is the latter aspect which dominates; these two pieces, like *Go Tell It on the Mountain,* are devoid of an overtly political content, and the author's angry message emerges through stylish dramatized narrative rather than vague sermonizing:

> My friend stayed outside the restaurant long enough to misdirect my pursuers and the police, who arrived, he told me, at once. I do not know what I said to him when he came to my room that night. I could not have said much. I felt, in the oddest, most awful way, that I had somehow betrayed him. . . . I could not get over two facts, both equally difficult for one imagination to grasp, and one was that I could have been murdered. But the other was that I had been ready to commit murder. I saw nothing very clearly but I did see this: that my life, my *real* life, was in danger, and not from anything other people might do but from the hatred I carried in my own heart.

"Equal in Paris" and "Notes of a Native Son" come close to justifying every word of praise ever uttered about *Notes of a Native Son.* On the other hand, Baldwin's second collection, *Nobody Knows My Name,* which also received high praise, contains nothing that comes anywhere near matching the remarkable quality of those two essays. Baldwin largely restricts himself here to reportage about the desperate condition of Southern blacks; while these articles are, as reportage, far more professional than their earlier counterparts in *Notes of a Native Son,* their literary value is strictly that of good celebrity journalism. And when Baldwin does use explicitly autobiographical material, the results, particularly in "The Black Boy Looks at the White Boy," are diminished by a distressing new quality: an extreme, even mannered, self-consciousness.

YET whatever may have been wrong with *Nobody Knows My Name,* readers of the November 17, 1962 *New Yorker* who opened their copies in order to read a report by James Baldwin on the Black Muslims called "Letter from a Region in My Mind" suddenly found in their hands the literary equivalent of a pinless grenade. The opening paragraph of this extraordinary essay, which quickly found its way between hard covers as *The Fire Next Time,* was riveting:

> I underwent, during the summer that I became fourteen, a prolonged religious crisis. I use the word "religious" in the common, and arbitrary, sense, meaning that I then discovered God, His saints and angels, and His blazing Hell. And since I had been born in a Christian nation, I accepted this Deity as the only one. I supposed Him to exist only within the walls of a church—in fact, of *our* church—and I also supposed that God and safety were synonymous. . . .

Baldwin, describing the religion of his youth with incomparable vividness, concludes in *The Fire Next Time* that it is no longer sufficient. In light of the long history of racism, "whoever wishes to become a truly moral human being . . . must first divorce himself from all the prohibitions, crimes, and hypocrisies of the Christian church." He interprets the rise of the Black Muslims, who preach that Allah is black and the white man the devil, as the predictable outcome of the moral decadence of Christianity; though he rejects the simple-minded demonology and racial separatism of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X, he finds in it rough justice for the sins of the white man. The situation, however, is not altogether hopeless:

> If we—and now I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others—do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country, and change the history of the world. If we do not now dare everything, the fulfillment of that prophecy, recreated from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us: "God gave Noah the

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rainbow sign, No more water, the Fire next time!"

The Fire Next Time is not without its stylistic miscalculations, the worst of which is "My Dungeon Shook," a four-page preface bearing the subtitle "Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation" and through whose resolute platitudes one slogs with dismay. But Baldwin's writing in the rest of *The Fire Next Time* is generally quite marvelous. It is, in fact, so good that something like an act of will is needed to ask the key question: what is being said here? What is being recommended?

"I was always exasperated by his notions of society, politics, and history," James Baldwin once said of Richard Wright, "for they seemed to me to be utterly fanciful." These harsh words are even more readily applicable to Baldwin himself, who is in a very real sense a man with neither politics nor philosophy. The political impact of his best work was previously achieved through implication alone; *The Fire Next Time* reveals that his specific responses to the condition of blacks in America are wholly emotional. F.W. Dupee was one of the few critics who attempted to find the substance in Baldwin's gorgeously inflammatory prose, and his essay on *The Fire Next Time* clearly demonstrates the extent to which the book's "message" can be reduced to a string of meaningless generalizations:

> For example: "White Americans do not believe in death, and this is why the darkness of my skin so intimidates them." But suppose one or two white Americans are *not* intimidated. Suppose someone coolly asks what it means to "believe in death." Again: "Do I really *want* to be integrated into a burning house?" Since you have no other, yes; and the better-disposed firemen will welcome your assistance. . . . Again: "The real reason that nonviolence is considered to be a virtue in Negroes . . . is that white men do not want their lives, their self-image, or their property threatened." Of course they don't, especially their lives. Moreover, this imputing of "real

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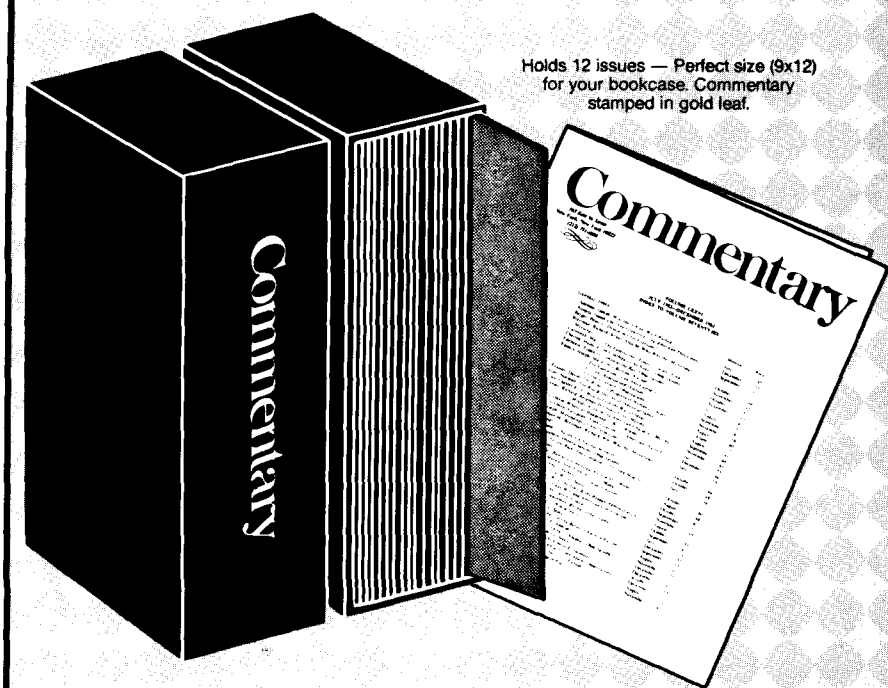

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reasons" for the behavior of entire populations is self-defeating, to put it mildly.

Despite its still formidable reputation as a central document in the struggle for equality, *The Fire Next Time* turns out to have little of interest to say about the question of racial politics. Its impact comes solely from the fact that it is so exquisitely written. And Baldwin's timing was immaculate. His passionate prophecies of impending doom scorched the collective consciousness of middle-class Americans in a way that no amount of sober analysis could have rivaled.

BUT *The Fire Next Time* was the last point at which the curve of James Baldwin's career intersected with the *Zeitgeist* of the Great Society. Public black rhetoric came to be dominated, just as Baldwin had predicted it would, by loveless images of violence. And Baldwin's response to this change was, to say the least, disheartening.

Though *The Fire Next Time* was full of the language of extremism, its message was not yet one of racial hate. That was still to come. In *No Name in the Street*, his 1972 sequel to *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin's striking prose style, that arresting amalgam of Henry James and the Old Testament, remained largely intact. But the ends to which he now directed this style were another matter altogether. For even the most casual reading of *No Name in the Street* revealed that the literary control manifested in *The Fire Next Time* had now been coarsened by aimless, free-floating political hysteria.

The best and worst of this disturbing book can be found in a single brilliantly staged scene which is just fantastic enough to be true. Baldwin, shortly after Martin Luther King's assassination, tells the columnist Leonard Lyons that he will never again be able to wear the suit he wore to the King funeral; Lyons duly publishes the item. A few weeks later, Baldwin receives a call from the man who was his best friend in junior high school and whom he has not seen since. "He could not afford to have suits in his closet which he didn't wear," Baldwin explains, "he couldn't afford my elegant despair. Martin was dead, but *he* was living, he needed a suit, and—I was just his size." An exchange is proposed: one used suit for one home-cooked dinner in Harlem. With cold and terrifying detachment Baldwin describes an evening in the "small, dark, unspeakably respectable, incredibly hard-won rooms" of his old friend, meticulously recording every agonizing detail of the mutual discomfort of old friends who have grown apart. And then the conversation turns to the war in Vietnam:

> I told him that Americans had no business at all in Vietnam; and that black people certainly had no business there, aiding the slave master to enslave yet more millions of dark people, and also identifying themselves with the white American crimes. . . . It wasn't, I said, hard to understand why a black boy, standing, futureless, on the corner, would decide to join the Army, nor was it hard to decipher the slave master's reasons for hoping that he wouldn't live to come home, with a gun; but it wasn't necessary, after all, to defend it: to defend, that is, one's murder and one's murderers. "Wait a minute," he said, "let me stand up and tell you what I think we're trying to do there." "*We*?" I cried, "what motherfucking *we*? You stand up, motherfucker, and I'll kick you in the ass!"

After a career spent dancing in and out of "the bloody crossroads," Baldwin had at last faltered. The lapse was to be permanent. Aside from *The Devil Finds Work*, an erratic and frequently embarrassing volume of autobiography masquerading as film criticism, he published only a handful of political essays after *No Name in the Street*. They are shocking in their abandonment of all pretense to literary detachment; in them Baldwin luxuriates in the foul rhetoric of zealotry that for more than a decade poisoned this country's political discourse:

> Therefore, in a couple of days, blacks may be using the vote to outwit the Final Solution. Yes. The Final Solution. No black person can afford to forget that the history of this country is genocidal from where the buffalo once roamed to where our ancestors were slaughtered (from New Orleans to New York, from Birmingham to Boston) and to the Caribbean to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Saigon. Oh, yes, let freedom ring.

One hates to see such mindless fatuities (published originally in the *Nation*) under the byline of the man who wrote "Equal in Paris" and "Notes of a Native Son."

It is impossible to read the second half of *The Price of the Ticket* without feeling an intense sadness at the literary tragedy it embodies. And it is equally difficult to read the rest of the book without coming to feel that of its seven hundred pages one would willingly, even gratefully, part with all but *The Fire Next Time* and a handful of shorter essays. To revisit James Baldwin's nonfiction is to understand the full extent to which the trivializing claims of radical politics undermined the artistic career of the man about whom Edmund Wilson once said: "He is not only one of the best Negro writers that we have ever had in this country, he is one of the best writers that we have."

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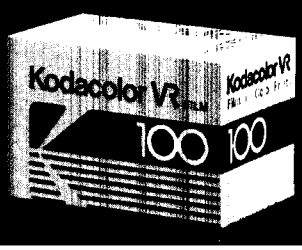

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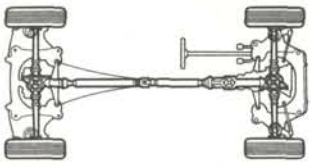

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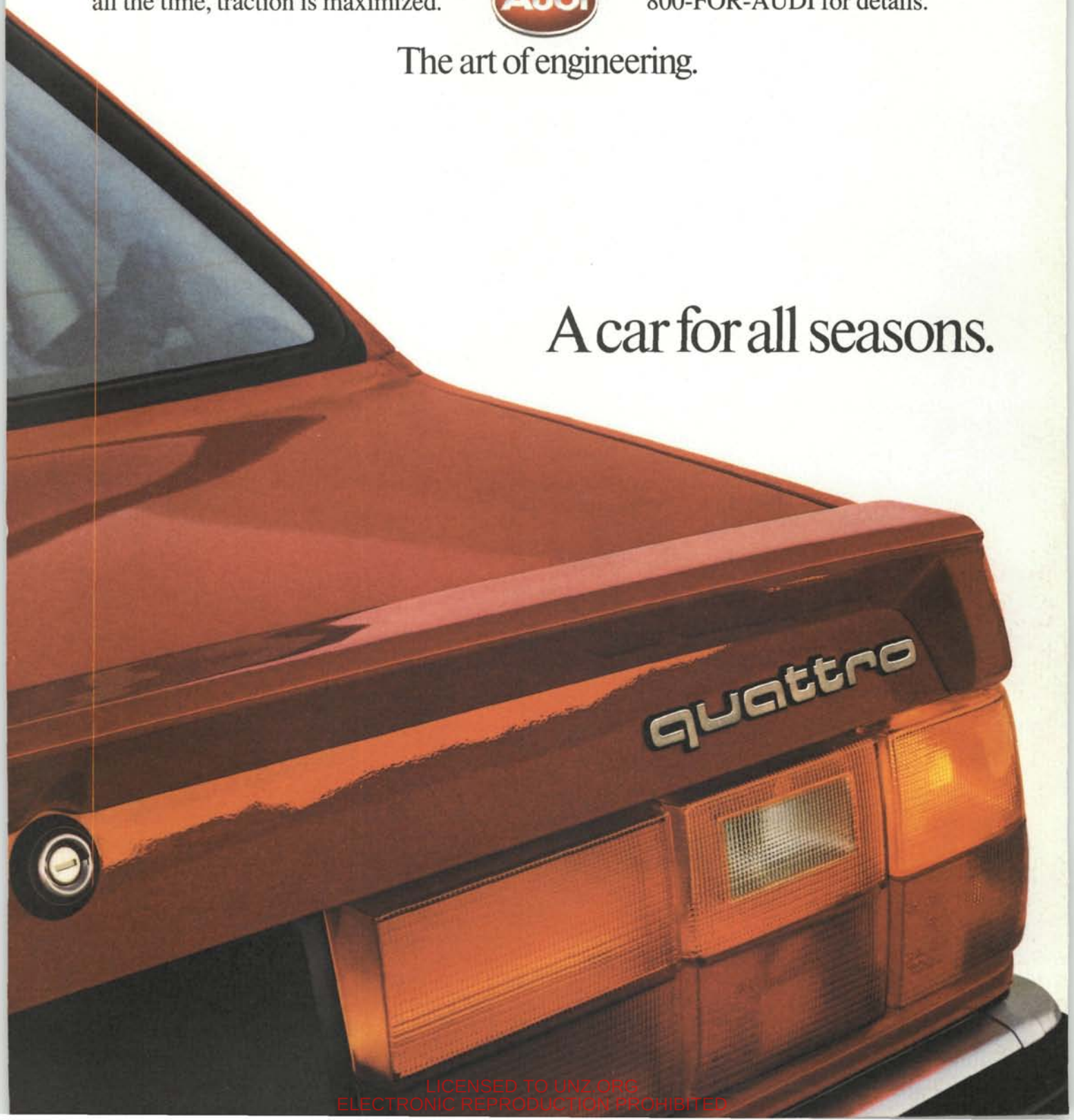

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